



General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

16th plenary meeting

Saturday, 25 September 2010, 9 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m.

Address by Mr. Jurelang Zedkaia, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Mr. Jurelang Zedkaia, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Jurelang Zedkaia, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Zedkaia: I bring the warm greetings of "Yokwe" from the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Every September since the country became a member of the United Nations in 1991, leaders of the low-lying Republic of the Marshall Islands have been reminding the international community of the need for full global action on climate change.

We have no mountains or high ground; we have only our narrow archipelago resting a metre above the ocean. There has been enough talk, and too much repetition. It is now time for meaningful action, creative cooperation and visible results to address climate change. If we fail in the short-term, the economic and moral costs for our low-lying islands —

and eventually the whole world — will be beyond calculation.

The global commitment at Copenhagen to safeguard the most vulnerable faces a true litmus test: will our local communities see visible results leading towards a climate-resilient future? I urge that by the time of the climate change talks in Cancún nations build political trust through "fast start" finance, by providing transparent information and actively turning commitments into results.

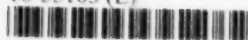
We cannot wait for the uncertain path to achieve a full multilateral climate agreement, and we cannot allow laggards to set us back. Those most vulnerable and those willing to confront the challenges facing us must take leadership in this process by putting forward our own agreement spelling out real and ambitious commitments and actions to address climate change. And we urge others to follow.

To work in true partnership we must first show our own commitment. The Marshall Islands Government has endorsed a new climate change road map, spelling out specific actions to cut our own emissions by 40 per cent by 2020, and concrete strategies to ensure that the growth of our local communities is safeguarded from climate impacts.

The Marshall Islands has made important progress towards achieving several Millennium Development Goals, but much remains to be accomplished. With our international partners, we must also better address climate change risks in the context of our core development.

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Practical and "shovel ready" adaptation actions taken now — water security, resource conservation and infrastructure protection — will sharply reduce the long-term risks to our security and sovereignty. But we cannot ignore such threats. It should be a matter of serious concern to the Secretary-General that we are actively contemplating risks to our territorial integrity and United Nations membership, that we are considering options to safeguard our population's political rights if our land — and our thin water table — becomes unusable in the face of rising seas.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is known to the United Nations as a small island developing State, but we are first and foremost a large ocean nation. Our thin atolls may appear tiny on a map, but our exclusive economic zone is over 2 million square kilometres. As Chair of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement, I address the United Nations on behalf of a unified political bloc vested in ensuring the future of the Western and Central Pacific, the world's largest viable tuna fishery.

The development pathways of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement are narrow and limited, and at the highest levels we have committed to putting a firm stop to the unrestricted global harvest of our resources. The status quo of overfishing is unacceptable; it has strangled our development and threatened the viability of our resources. We have closed off surrounding pockets of international waters, and if our development and ecosystem needs so demand, we will close off more.

We currently realize only a tiny fraction of a multibillion-dollar industry — only one penny from each can of Pacific tuna — and we are seeking global support and economic partnership to grow our benefit. Without political and economic cooperation in regional fisheries decision-making, and unless fishing targets are in line with science, the collective economic development of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement will remain at a standstill as our coastal resources decline. We have already driven our partners to achieve positive action. However, far greater efforts are needed, from both United Nations agencies and regional fisheries management organizations, to identify time-bound strategies which assist us in realizing a greater share of benefits from our own resources.

The United Nations must make faster progress towards reflecting modern twenty-first-century dynamics. The Security Council should be restructured to accommodate those nations whose size, leadership and responsibility — in particular, the Group of Four of Japan, Germany, India and Brazil — indicate a deserved role as permanent members. Further efforts should also ensure that Africa and small nations, including island States, have an improved voice.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands welcomes the progress achieved on both sides of the Taiwan Straits. The pragmatic and moderate actions of Taiwan should not be overlooked by the United Nations, and deserve further encouragement. I call upon the United Nations system and Member States to be open-minded and identify appropriate means to accept Taiwan's participation within specialized agencies, including the International Civil Aviation Organization, and in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In particular, recognizing the commitment to reduce emissions by the 23 million people of Taiwan — a fellow island nation — in addressing climate change is in the common interest of us all.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands welcomes the leadership of the United Arab Emirates as host of the International Renewable Energy Agency. We look forward to pursuing increased partnership with the United Arab Emirates and to establishing a dialogue with the Arab League on investment and development assistance in the Pacific region.

Finally, I must address one of this year's most important issues within the United Nations. Member States and leaders must improve progress towards achieving the goal of stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and pursue the peace and security of a world without them.

The Marshall Islands has a unique reason for seeking the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. During our time as a United Nations Trust Territory, 67 large-scale surface tests of nuclear weapons were conducted on our homeland, explicitly authorized under two United Nations resolutions, in 1954 and 1956. No people should ever bear such a burden. For decades, we have told the United Nations about our communities who are still displaced, about the deliberate use of our people in scientific experiments and of ongoing health impacts inherited through generations. We continue to face the challenges of a

United Nations-era nuclear waste storage site, surrounded by rising waters, towards dealing with which we lack resources or technical capacity.

We acknowledge important and positive actions already taken by partners, including our former administrator, the United States, but we need, and deserve, improved attention and assistance from the United States, as well as from the United Nations system and multilateral bodies.

I also acknowledge the support of the Pacific Islands Forum, including the leadership of the outgoing chair, Australia, as well as of the Non-Aligned Movement, in ensuring that this year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons acknowledged the need to address sites contaminated by testing. I fully expect that Member States of the United Nations will be willing to further recognize that a special responsibility exists towards former United Nations Trust Territories adversely affected by nuclear testing. As the United Nations maps a global future of non-proliferation, the past legacy of nuclear activities can no longer be ignored.

The message is the same for nuclear weapons, global security and freedom from terrorism, or climate change: international law is not an empty promise.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jurelang Zedkaia, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Nicholas Joseph Orville Liverpool, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Mr. Nicholas Joseph Orville Liverpool, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Nicholas Joseph Orville Liverpool, President of the

Commonwealth of Dominica, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Liverpool: I begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your well-deserved election to preside over the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Additionally, I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of Libya for his effective, strong and dynamic leadership during the sixty-fourth session and to salute Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tremendous efforts in promoting global peace, security and development.

I address the Assembly as we confront the second decade of this millennium, which brings such tremendous opportunities for mankind. Scientific and technological innovations have made the world a truly global village characterized by continuing connectivity and unimagined possibilities for facilitating global development. These technologies, integrating as they do even the smallest and traditionally most distant countries into the day-to-day activities of the world community, have the potential to combat hunger, eradicate poverty, generate employment, and elevate the standard of living of people throughout the world, without compromising the integrity of our ecosystem and planet Earth.

However, in order to realize the full potential of these opportunities, the community of nations now needs to muster the courage to pursue with determination reforms in international and multilateral institutions such as the United Nations which will ensure equality of treatment, and bring the benefits of development to those countries which, in consequence of small size, are often the least endowed, and most vulnerable in today's world community.

The formulation and pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has brought the world's attention to the main issues of development, especially the challenges faced by developing countries. It also brought to the fore the nexus which exists between financial, social and economic development on the one hand and the sustainable use of natural resources on the other.

By and large, we in the developing world have lived up to the commitments which we made, by mobilizing domestic financial resources for development and making major structural changes, even in the face of an increasingly hostile economic, financial and trading system. Those efforts have been

coupled with international resources for development in the form of foreign direct investment and official development assistance. The results to date have been encouraging when one considers where we were at the beginning of the millennium. There still remain, however, a number of unresolved global issues which have stymied the efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

We suggest, therefore, that the next five years before the target date of the MDGs must see a reconfiguration and acceleration of efforts by all Member States. This should begin with the fulfilment of commitments already given by developed countries, and South-South cooperation must be strengthened in keeping with the kind of solidarity now being demonstrated by Venezuela, Cuba, China, Brazil and other such developing countries.

Negotiation of the Doha Development Round must be concluded within a reasonable time, and in that regard the very small States of the developing world must continue to insist, even as others resist it, on meaningful recognition by the global community of the principle of special and differential treatment, rather than a "one size fits all" approach, as a central principle permitting beneficial economic adjustment for countries like my own. This will provide developing countries with an opportunity to compete in the global trading system and place greater emphasis on trade rather than aid.

The phenomenon of climate change has been well documented by the United Nations and other institutions over the past decade. In fact, we in the Caribbean and other small island developing States can speak of our experience with the increasing intensity of hurricanes, droughts, floods, destruction to coastal areas and rising sea levels. These have had severe impacts on our agriculture, tourism, and physical infrastructure, especially along our coasts, leading to an increasingly high cost for adaptation and mitigation, resulting in the diversion of funds which otherwise would have been used for social and economic development. Climate change, therefore, has become a major threat to the ability of most developing countries to achieve the MDGs.

For almost two decades the United Nations has recognized the special economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities of small island developing States. Since the Mauritius meeting in

2005, their situation has become even more precarious. The impacts of the world food and fuel crises in 2007 and the financial and economic crisis in 2008 have clearly demonstrated the open and vulnerable nature of our economies. This, coupled with the impact of climate change, strengthens the case for a unique position for small island developing States and hence a more prominent place within the United Nations system as a recognized category, with all the attendant benefits and obligations.

Despite our many challenges, small island developing States continue to demonstrate strong leadership, particularly in the area of climate change and in the work of the United Nations in general. Significant progress has been made in the areas of the protection of biodiversity, strategies for promoting renewable energy, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. These efforts need to be complemented both by the United Nations system and by other Member States, especially the developed countries.

It is regrettable that to date no consensus has been reached on the best way to deal with what we consider a clear and present danger to our planet. The failure at Copenhagen should be further motivation for all countries to work assiduously towards an agreement in Mexico.

We commend the efforts being made towards a consensus on climate change; however, we maintain that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should be the primary forum for negotiating the global response to climate change. We therefore call upon all Member States to work within this framework in order to arrive expeditiously at a binding agreement which will recognize the shared but differentiated responsibilities of Member States.

Since its establishment, the United Nations has played, as it continues to play, a critical role in fostering greater understanding among nations and maintaining peace and security throughout the world. The United Nations has also been able to reduce conflict and minimize tensions between countries and peoples. These efforts have been buttressed by other significant efforts, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In May this year the United Nations held the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Dominica supports the outcome of the Conference, and calls upon all Member States to adhere to the obligations of the Treaty. We call for a world free of nuclear weapons, and join the calls for total disarmament.

Small arms and light weapons continue to pose a major threat to peace and security throughout the world. Dominica is very concerned over the increase in that illicit trade in the Caribbean region. We are not convinced that the larger nations of the world comprehend the extent of the inability of smaller nations like my own, which bridge the producers and consumers of narcotic substances, to cope with this new horror.

The continued demand in the North for drugs produced in the South, and the growth of the related trade in small arms and light weapons, have placed us in the crossfire of these illicit activities. Yet it appears to us that the larger nations of the world only take decisive steps to cope with this situation when it has become untenable for themselves. In that context, we do not believe that sufficient consultation now exists to ensure that the smaller States are provided, on a continuous basis, with the capabilities needed for persistent attention to the problems that arise in our jurisdictions. This is yet another aspect of the case for special and differential treatment in the security and social development spheres.

The threat of terrorism is of concern throughout the world. Radical extremism has created an environment in which cultural and religious misunderstandings and misplaced anger have claimed the lives of thousands. We extend our sympathy to all the Member States which have lost citizens at the hands of those who have sought to destabilize Governments and to instil fear in the rest of humanity. By its very nature, the fight against terrorism requires global action. This must involve the efforts of the United Nations in fostering a culture of peace, tolerance and understanding among the peoples of the world.

During last year's general debate (see A/64/PV.7), Dominica recognized the important role of the United Nations in the rebuilding process of our sister nation of Haiti. We also called upon those Member States that had pledged assistance to make good on their promises

in order to foster Haiti's social and economic development. Today, the challenges facing Haiti have been magnified to a degree which requires further commitments from all Member States of the United Nations. The destruction wrought in Haiti by the earthquake in January has made the need for resource mobilization a matter of extreme urgency.

In March the United Nations hosted the International Donors' Conference towards a New Future for Haiti. Dominica wishes to commend the organizers and the contributors to this initiative. During the Conference several Member States pledged their support for the reconstruction efforts. Commitments of several billion dollars were made. Sadly, to date the Government and people of Haiti have been able to access only a fraction of those pledges. We call on all Member States to make good their promises so as to ensure that the rebuilding process can continue and to avoid further deterioration of the political, social and economic situation of that country.

The focus in rebuilding Haiti should be not solely on physical infrastructure, but also on the building and rebuilding of institutions to strengthen the governance of Haiti and to empower its people through technology transfer and capacity-building. It should also include development of the productive sectors to place Haiti on a path to economic independence.

Most important, the international community must recognize and accept that the Government and people of Haiti must be placed at the centre of the reconstruction process so as to engender a spirit of unity of purpose, ownership and meaningful partnership, even at these most challenging times.

The crisis in Haiti presents both a challenge and an opportunity, not only to the international community, but also to the Governments and financial institutions to which that country remains heavily indebted. We call on those international financial institutions and Governments to cancel the remaining debt owed by Haiti in order to provide more latitude for that country to fully realize its recovery efforts. As regards trade, we urge all Member States to liberalize trading regimes so as to allow greater access of Haitian products into their markets without barriers.

Earlier I spoke of the threats which plague mankind in the era of globalization. I also highlighted the need for multilateralism and the need for cooperation between States. Those challenges can be

overcome only in a global environment where there exist respect for each other's territorial integrity; non-interference in each other's domestic affairs; and respect for sovereignty and the right to self-determination. It is in this context that Dominica again calls on the United States of America to discontinue its economic blockade against the people of the Republic of Cuba.

The rule of law is an important aspect of international law. Adherence to our international obligations is important to the maintenance of peace and security and to ensuring that all persons, regardless of race, nationality, creed or gender, continue to believe in the international system and to recognize that this system is for the benefit of all peoples and nations, whether large or small. That is why the situation in which our sister nation of Antigua and Barbuda has been placed vis-à-vis its dispute with the United States of America is extremely unfortunate and must be remedied as quickly as possible. We urge the parties involved to quickly seek to resolve the situation and arrive at a negotiated settlement that is fair and just.

The citizens of this planet have come to recognize that new developments in technology have brought an interdependence among peoples and States as they vigorously pursue the development of their separate countries. They have also come to realize that there must be increasing cooperation between nations in order to ensure a deliberate and planned approach to the maintenance and development of the resources of this planet. In that connection, regional processes of cooperation have increasingly come to characterize the conduct of nations.

But as the technology of communication has increased international connectiveness, it has also become apparent that regionalism often proves insufficient, and that a global approach must be taken to new issues which arise. Therefore, my country strongly supports the principle that it is the United Nations, to which all countries turn in times of crises, that must play the fundamental role in the surveillance of all developments affecting our planet. Consequently, we hereby reaffirm our commitment to the central role that the United Nations should play in global governance.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Commonwealth of Dominica for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Nicholas Joseph Orville Liverpool, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will hear an address by the Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King Mswati: It is a pleasure for me to address the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

We meet following the historic review summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the High-level Plenary Meeting of the Assembly, which gave us the opportunity to review progress and share experiences and ideas on how best to achieve our set goals and objectives for 2015. As we return to our respective countries we go with renewed commitment to keep working harder to meet the MDGs.

I would like at the outset to extend our thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General and the United Nations agencies for their presence around the world. We commend the active participation of the United Nations in various missions, such as efforts to restore peace in conflict areas, and its role in disaster relief and in various exercises to fight hunger and poverty.

We pledge ourselves to continue to support the United Nations in its primary role of ensuring that all the nations of the world live peacefully with each other while supporting nation-building through development projects.

The theme for this sixty-fifth session, "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance", came at a most opportune time in

the life of the United Nations, since we have been calling for all our voices to be heard. I must hasten to state that all the wars and conflicts that we see around the world can only be resolved through peaceful dialogue and negotiations. The United Nations is the organization best positioned for this task. There is no place for unilateralism.

It is on this basis that the Kingdom of eSwatini reaffirms our call for the finalization of the United Nations reforms, with particular reference to the Security Council. It should be appreciated that the world today faces a new set of challenges, different from those that it faced when our Organization was founded in 1945; thus the urgent need for the United Nations to remain dynamic and transform itself to meet today's challenges.

One of the major organs that require immediate reform is the Security Council, which has seen a number of regions expressing a desire to gain membership, to ensure wider representation. The Kingdom of eSwatini stands by the African position, as clearly stated in the Ezulwini Consensus, that Africa should have two permanent and five non-permanent seats. We hope that during this session this matter will be finalized.

We in the African continent are committed to resolving all conflicts through peaceful dialogue. The coordination and cooperation between the African Union and its various regional blocs is beginning to pay handsome dividends. We now approach issues as a collective for better results. We are happy that the United Nations continues to work and cooperate with us in effecting our programmes for peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

The General Assembly will know that the African Union declared 2010 to be our Year of Peace and Security. We have made it clear that all perpetrators of coups and civil wars and all forms of conflict should be dealt with squarely and decisively. Indeed, we are committed to the promotion of lasting peace, because it is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. We appreciate the support of the United Nations in our resolve to ensure that peace prevails in the continent and, indeed, the whole world.

I am happy to say that I personally had the honour of lighting and hoisting the African flame of peace twice this year. The Swazi nation prides itself on this, because we are a peaceful nation, which is telling

the world that peace is the best formula for development.

Another issue that touches upon global governance is that of the Kingdom of Morocco. It is our considered view that the United Nations, working with relevant regional organizations, should work on the issue and find a lasting solution.

We note with concern the continued conflicts in Madagascar, Somalia, Darfur, the Middle East and Afghanistan, to mention just a few. We call for the restoration of peace in all those areas, as it is always disturbing to see people undergo so much suffering due to conflicts.

While Afghanistan is still undergoing its process of reconciliation and the reconstruction of its institutions, it is depressing to note that there are at times pockets that seem to disturb the peace process in that country. We must continue to work hard to find lasting solutions, because such instability affects peace and prosperity, not only in Afghanistan, but also in neighbouring States and the region.

The Kingdom of eSwatini draws hope from the promising developments in Iraq, as that country continues on the road to peace through restoration of its important institutions for self-determination.

Furthermore, we are also following with keen interest efforts to ensure peace between Israel and Palestine. We are pleased to note the concerted mediation efforts led by the United States of America in bringing the parties together in pursuit of peace in the Middle East. We support this process, and remain optimistic that it will reach its desired conclusion, so that the Israelis and Palestinians can live together in harmony. In order to concentrate all their efforts towards development and peaceful coexistence, we call upon them to reach a compromise and place the best interests of peace and security above everything else.

Developments in cross-straits relations between the Republic of China on Taiwan and the People's Republic of China continue to be a source of inspiration to us all. We note with appreciation that the Republic of China on Taiwan and the People's Republic of China have made impressive strides to promote mutual understanding leading to more trade and interaction between them. I am happy to say that Taiwan highly appreciates being allowed to participate as an observer in the World Health Organization.

Hopefully, this will also lead to Taiwan's participating in a similar manner in all other United Nations agencies. Of particular interest is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Our world today continues to be concerned about nuclear proliferation and the threat that weapons of mass destruction pose to human existence, world peace, economic development and the environment. The spread of nuclear weapons makes a mockery of our efforts for world peace and protection of the environment.

It is a disheartening fact that currently efforts to ensure accountability and compliance with United Nations resolutions are hindered by an apparent lack of impartiality in the processes meant to completely rid the world of deadly nuclear weapons. I call upon the United Nations to strengthen the capacity of the International Atomic Energy Agency to enable the inspectors to do their work more effectively, with the involvement of all the countries with nuclear capability.

The United Nations must never compromise the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; it must ensure that all countries, without exception, comply. Countries must be made to comply and be accountable within clear time frames.

It is my suggestion that we eliminate all weapons of mass destruction, because they present an uncertain future. Indeed, we need a fresh start so that we may regain the moral high ground in deterring whoever may have ambitions for nuclear capability in the future. For example, if we compel everyone to dismantle their nuclear capacity we will be able to rein in other countries which may still be developing their arsenal, without being accused of unfairness or bias.

A world free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction will allow us to concentrate on issues of sustainable development.

As a developing nation, the Kingdom of eSwatini is following with keen interest the issues surrounding the effects of climate change. As an agriculture-based economy, the Kingdom is also a victim of environmental degradation. We therefore look forward to the climate change Conference to be held in Mexico later this year. I trust that the ongoing negotiations will result in agreements acceptable to all parties. What is of paramount importance is for the developed world to

honour pledges to assist developing countries in their mitigation and adaptation efforts.

It is a known fact that access to international markets for our products is one of the ways to grow our economies in our quest to eradicate poverty. We are encouraged that the developed nations have opened their markets for some products from developing countries. We look forward with optimism to an amicable conclusion of the Doha Round of talks, an outcome essential to boost global trade and economic recovery for the developing world.

As part of our development and poverty alleviation strategy, the Kingdom is ready to explore and exploit existing and emerging markets. Our focus is on limiting exportation of raw material by emphasizing the production of finished goods.

The Kingdom continues to promote equality in all sectors of our development spheres. We therefore welcome the recent establishment of the new United Nations entity for gender equality: UN Women. Women the world over continue to play key roles in contributing to the socio-economic and political development of our nations.

We are meeting as a family of nations that seeks to promote peace and coexistence among all nations of the world and bring hope for the future. Our people look to us, as leaders, to take the lead in promoting peace, as enshrined in the Charter.

We must find lasting solutions to all the challenges. They include poverty, unemployment, disease and global warming, but the major challenge is to make peace within and among all nations happen. By finding solutions, we shall indeed guarantee a clear road towards the achievement of sustainable development by all the nations of the world. We shall achieve that noble goal if we all reaffirm and adhere to the central role of the United Nations in global governance.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland for the statement he has just made.

His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Serbia.

Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Tadić: I stand before the Assembly gratified and in a position to salute it for playing a very important part in the process towards reconciliation in my region, and for supporting the consolidation of the new, modern Serbia. In a few days, we will proudly celebrate the tenth anniversary of our peaceful democratic revolution.

In a world confronted by so many threats, the United Nations must constantly reaffirm its original purpose and adapt to new challenges. The United Nations has confronted, through its many agencies, the scourges of discrimination, disease, hunger, poverty and environmental degradation. In other words, the United Nations has built a capacity to create rules that transcend frontiers, rules that we all respect.

One thing that we have all embraced, as Member States of the United Nations, is the wish to find solutions to all challenges through peaceful means, dialogue and consensus.

I opened with a specific reference to the General Assembly. A few weeks ago it adopted by acclamation resolution 64/298, proposed by Serbia and sponsored by the 27 States members of the European Union, acknowledging the content of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo.

The resolution is fundamentally status-neutral with regard to the status of Kosovo. All other interpretations do not correspond to the truth. The resolution welcomed the readiness of the EU to facilitate a process of dialogue between the parties. Serbia welcomes the resolution. We look forward to engaging in the process that will hopefully lead to a

mutually acceptable compromise solution to the problem of Kosovo.

Mr. Ould Hadrami (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We feel vindicated in our contention that the path to dialogue lay through the natural process of international legitimacy. The General Assembly sought an opinion from the International Court of Justice. The ICJ delivered an opinion. The General Assembly has now, as a consequence, called for dialogue. Moreover, that request comes as a consequence of a joint effort between Serbia and the European Union.

In the light of that, we sought reaffirmation of the validity of the international system as we know it. We feel proud that our faith in this process has produced results. We have always said that we are ready to engage in dialogue. But that dialogue must be framed by rules and accountability, and this has been achieved through the latest vote of the General Assembly.

Many have been involved in this process, and we are grateful for the contributions of all those who in the debate on the draft resolution expressed understanding for the position of Serbia. Our issue has been the first test of the new post-Lisbon institutions of the European Union, which we consider our natural and eventual home. We are encouraged by the commitment and sense of purpose of the leadership of these new institutions.

We should be very clear. Serbia has always maintained that the attempt to secede unilaterally is a violation of the basic principles of the Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). A vast majority of United Nations Member States refrained from recognizing Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. They have continued to abide by their Charter obligations to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country. On behalf of the Republic of Serbia, I once again sincerely thank those countries for their support and solidarity.

Serbia's position remains unchanged. The unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo will not be recognized by Serbia explicitly or implicitly. This is enshrined in our Constitution. We have repeatedly said that we seek dialogue, but within a framework of globally acknowledged law, the law of the United Nations. For this reason, we insisted on the process of

seeking the opinion of the International Court of Justice and the subsequent General Assembly resolution related to the Court's opinion.

Let me be very clear as to what the Court did and did not say. Its advisory opinion reaffirmed that Kosovo remains under the interim administration of the United Nations, and that Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the United Nations Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government in Kosovo stay in force and continue to apply. That means that this part of our territory remains subject to an international regime mandated by the Security Council.

The centrality and leading role of the Security Council in determining the comprehensive settlement of the Kosovo issue remains paramount, and will provide legitimacy to the result. The Court also did not endorse the view that Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence was *sui generis* — a unique case. Nor did it endorse any avowed right to self-determination for the province's ethnic Albanians.

The Court chose to examine the language of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, and held the view that the text of the declaration itself did not contain anything that violates international law. The Court, thus, did not approve the province's right to secession from Serbia, nor did it support the claim that Kosovo is a sovereign State.

The Court's opinion is clear: the unilateral declaration of independence was only "an attempt to determine finally the status of Kosovo" (A/64/881, advisory opinion, para. 114). The General Assembly resolution relating to the Court's opinion acknowledged this content of the Court's advisory opinion. It is within this framework that we are ready to follow the Assembly's resolution and to engage in a dialogue.

We are now ready to talk, and we will do so in good faith. Therefore, Serbia asks all Member States to engage fully in the spirit of their vote in the Assembly, in which they called for a dialogue to be facilitated by the European Union.

A dialogue requires trust. Soon the two parties will be talking to each other for the first time in many years. We must be patient and seek out those issues which allow confidence to be built on each side. There will be many issues to discuss, and some of them will be complicated.

All Member States can contribute to an atmosphere that creates trust. We are entering a phase in which creative solutions require political imagination, respect for our own democratic institutions and great skill. I trust that it can be a phase in which all parties leave behind them anachronistic analyses and diplomatic ambushes. We must be able to build confidence to have trust.

Serbia believes that the continued pursuit of recognition is futile and counter-productive to the spirit in which we now enter this phase. All those who wanted to make their point have made it, and we still do not have a clear settlement. I want to underline that it is of critical importance for Member States that have not recognized Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence to stay the course on non-recognition throughout the dialogue process. That will be a significant contribution to ensuring that unilateral attempts to impose outcomes of ethnic and territorial disputes are not legitimized, thereby preventing Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence from becoming a dangerous and destabilizing precedent.

Until now, statehood has never been attained without the consent of the parent State. A durable settlement on an issue of such magnitude and sensitivity has never been the product of compulsion; it always necessitates consent.

It would be equally harmful if there were attempts to alter realities on the ground while discussions get under way. Any attempt to change these realities through the use of force would bring an immediate end to the process of dialogue.

I address the Assembly today as a leader who believes that the future lies in seeking reconciliation. Our National Assembly adopted a historic Declaration on Srebrenica: a crime was condemned and an apology was extended. There is little precedent for such an action, and I am proud, in that it demonstrates the maturity of the democracy of Serbia.

I hope that more such gestures throughout the region will help us create a new region in which our shared history will unite us morally rather than divide us politically. For this, surely, is the foundation upon which the future will be built.

My guiding light is the history of the European Union. It should be for the entire region of South-East Europe. The European Union has been a story of

reconstruction and reconciliation. That story is not over. The Union faces its own challenges, and we in our region must assume the responsibility of emulating it. We must absorb the values and culture of today's Europe in order that the Union absorbs us.

This is a delicate exercise, in which expectations must be carefully nurtured. The EU is evolving. But so is our region. In this dynamic, we have to assume that the European Union will remain true to its word that the inhabitants of the region now referred to as the Western Balkans will all become citizens of the European Union. It would be a geographical, historical and cultural aberration if this were not so. However, as the region goes through its own changes, it is particularly sensitive to the signals that it receives from the European Union. We hope that as the new institutions of the Union take shape, we will have an increasingly clear communication from and with the EU.

It is also true that our region is changing. To a very large extent, it is changing to the good. We should recognize the many new levels of cooperation that exist in our region. The Western Balkans — which has been affected by the financial crisis — is a story of many small and larger incremental successes. In fact, relations have never been better. But the region must also acknowledge that as it develops its successes can generate new challenges.

There is one area, therefore, on which I wish to speak with a clarity that may be deemed undiplomatic. Organized crime is now a global industry. It is the dark side of globalization. It attaches itself to weak societies. It attaches itself to political and religious extremists. It attempts to buy and subvert democracies. Like water, it spreads to where it finds least resistance. It is global and globalized in its interconnections.

Organized crime, I want to state emphatically, is in the Western Balkans. I consider it to be the greatest single challenge to my country and to the whole region. It always has been present, and it was given solid foundations because of the wars in our region. But I fear that it is developing capabilities — acquired from the globalization of crime and access to technology — at a much faster pace. The criminals concerned are bringing drugs, guns, human trafficking and corruption into our societies. In doing so, they are using our region to spread into Europe. I fear that we are in a race against time in our region. The stark

choice is that South-Eastern Europe will become either a valuable bridge between Europe and vital areas to the East or it will become the beachhead of organized crime trying to reach Europe.

We have a common responsibility as leaders in our region to eliminate this scourge on our societies, and Serbia will spare no effort in our quest to eradicate this threat. It is our responsibility to all our neighbours. For this reason there has been a growing number of meetings and consultations between us in the region on this matter.

But today I want to say that this issue cannot be addressed tactically and occasionally. It is a strategic issue that affects all of Europe. I am therefore asking that we all become alert to the next generation of threat.

In our region, we have a responsibility to create a strategic alliance against organized crime. We hope that all Western Balkan States will make fighting it a priority. We owe this to our citizens, we owe it to our neighbours in the European Union, and we owe it to the next generation.

Serbia has historically been part of global movements. That is why we are totally engaged in achieving membership of the European Union. That is why we support the United Nations system. It is also why we are now moving to reactivate the many relationships that we built historically, as part of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

My country is the largest successor to a founding member of the Movement. Serbia's capital, Belgrade, was the site of the First NAM Summit in 1961. I am proud that one of the capstone events marking the Movement's fiftieth anniversary will be celebrated in Belgrade next September.

As part of our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, we are strengthening many of our engagements and commitments worldwide through the Movement. We shall contribute to those countries that would welcome assistance, and we look to an intensification of cooperation. I hope that this is a clear signal that my Government believes in an active global engagement that will contribute to both global solidarity and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Serbia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Desiré Delano Bouterse, President of the Republic of Suriname

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will hear an address by the President of the Republic of Suriname.

Mr. Desiré Delano Bouterse, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Desiré Delano Bouterse, President of the Republic of Suriname, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Bouterse: On behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Suriname, I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election to preside over this sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I am pleased to see Switzerland, one of the newest members of the Organization, occupying this high office, especially since his country has a long-standing and constructive record regarding international neutrality and respect for international order. I am convinced that his diplomatic experience, as well as his well-known in-depth knowledge of current international issues, will enable him to successfully discharge the important responsibilities of his office. As one of the Vice-Chairs, Suriname pledges its full support for his work agenda for this session.

I wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his unwavering efforts in steering the Assembly's work at its sixty-fourth session.

I also pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, for his leadership and guidance of this Organization throughout the past years of crisis and turbulence.

It is a great honour for me today to address the Assembly, as a leader who recently received a mandate from the Surinamese people to realize sustainable economic and social development through our own efforts and with the support of all friendly nations.

Twenty-seven years ago I had the honour to address the Assembly. I then stated:

"by the same token, we are dismayed by the fact that, in spite of the presence of the Organization on the international scene for almost four decades, its lofty goal of creating an international order based on respect for international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes seems today to be as elusive as ever". (A/38/PV.28)

Today we can conclude that things have not fundamentally changed.

The challenge we face is that of striking a proper balance between full recognition of the sovereignty of the individual Member States of the United Nations and the apparent need for global governance regarding the global issues that endanger the very survival of our planet and its inhabitants. We are not there yet. It has become obvious to Suriname that this balance can be achieved only when participants in the international arena refrain from using military force and/or economic coercion. We have even seen States abuse their own legal system to force their political will on another nation.

Restricting ourselves to the Caribbean region, the Republic of Suriname is deeply concerned about the persistence of the imposition for almost half a century of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba with the aim of changing developments of that nation's political, economic and social road map. Those coercive measures cause unnecessary hardship and have severe effects on the rightful development and well-being of the Cuban people. Suriname therefore joins Member States which since 1992 have consistently been calling in vain for the rejection of the unilaterally imposed embargo against Cuba. As is the case on the national level, the international community will prosper only when all values protected by the rule of law are distributed equally, notwithstanding the asymmetry that characterizes international relations.

My country finds itself at a crossroads in its history. The electorate gave its leaders a mission to create a society in which everyone participates and everyone shares in what the country has to offer, meeting their basic material means, and in which solidarity prevails. The aim is the creation of a just society in which people can develop themselves to their highest potential and become international role models and leaders in areas in which our society excels. No one will be left behind in this task of nation-building. My Government pledges not to waste, but to protect, our national inheritance and assets for future generations and the world. Moreover, we will seize every opportunity to generate greater national wealth.

We will devote special attention to groups who in the past have had limited scope for development. In this regard, I refer to our indigenous peoples and our countrymen living in tribal communities. Our intention is to gradually break the cycle of their isolation and considerably improve their quality of life.

When we look at the many national challenges facing us, it is clear that our task will not be easy. In almost all sectors of the economy and society we have suffered enormous neglect, and there has been a decline, stagnation and reversal of national growth. As a result, today many segments of our society have become desperate and hopeless. We therefore need a bold new visionary approach to give our people what they justly deserve as co-owners of a nation endowed and blessed with so many riches.

However, we need to overcome two huge challenges that since decolonization have haunted and blighted our national destiny as a people.

First, we must dismantle any lingering remnants of the colonial police State which blocks and obstructs the establishment of a free, democratic, constitutional State based on the pillars of an independent judiciary, a Government free of corruption, a legislature that acts in the interests of the people, and a free and independent press committed to the honest dissemination of information.

Another major challenge that we face is the transformation of our society from an economy which is merely a source of profit for foreign interest groups into one that is based and built on a healthy interdependence. Suriname needs a new national

economic approach created by Surinamers and for Surinamers.

We realize that we are part of the global community, which as a result of technology is gradually turning into a global village, fostering intensive relations in both a negative and a positive sense. Despite all the resources and knowledge at our disposal, we are still faced with what seems an insurmountable challenge: to rid the world of extreme poverty, to ensure adequate education for our children, to stem the tide of infectious and other diseases, or to take responsible decisions on environmental sustainability. We have to recognize that with today's interdependence many challenges transcend national borders and that the ability of countries, in particular developing countries, to make progress on many of the international development goals does not merely depend on domestic policy choices. An international enabling environment in this regard is of increased significance.

Climate change is a global threat that will affect developing countries in a most devastating way. Suriname, with its low-lying coast, belongs to the top 10 countries which will be seriously affected by sea-level rise. This is ironic, because we are not culpable for the excessive levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, but we are about to bear a heavy part of the brunt.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, global biodiversity loss is high, so high that 2010 has been declared the International Year of Biodiversity by the United Nations in order to attract attention to this global problem. In this respect, Suriname could serve as an example for the world, as its laws to save forest and biodiversity date from the middle of the past century. We are proud to state here today that Suriname is rightly called the greenest country on Earth for its 90 per cent forest cover.

That having been said, it is ironic that a country such as Suriname, with such a good environmental track record, is overlooked and that the world's efforts are concentrated on countries that are using their resources unsustainably, thereby sending the wrong message globally. We believe that we should tackle this problem head on, starting at home, moving towards our immediate neighbours and from there to the subregion of South America and the Caribbean, thus creating a

substantial force at the world forum dealing with the ill effects of climate change.

It seems that the standing forest and the wealth of Suriname's biodiversity are being taken for granted by the global community, as there are no structures in place to provide incentives to continue on the path of sustainability. Despite that, we promise that our choices for development will duly respect a proper balance between nature and development.

Various high-level meetings have been organized to address issues of common concern, such as the fight against HIV/AIDS, the negative effects of climate change, arms proliferation, the effects of the global economic and financial crisis and transnational organized crime and its associated ills.

At this time it is necessary to draw special attention to the issue of non-communicable diseases, which is of great concern to all of us. The initiative of Caribbean Community leaders, subsequently endorsed by the Commonwealth, to organize a high-level meeting of the General Assembly in 2011 to address the rising incidence and prevalence of non-communicable diseases is very important. It highlights the ever-growing need for the international community to join forces in addressing this global barrier to development.

Although non-communicable diseases are currently not a part of the indicators for assessing progress in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), they undoubtedly have a negative impact on those Goals. We can no longer ignore this emerging health crisis, which disproportionately impacts the poorest people, pushing them further into poverty and deprivation. Therefore, the global development agenda needs to include measures to address this problem, if we do not wish to jeopardize the accelerated achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

We are aware of poverty and extreme human suffering resulting from natural disasters. We empathize with the peoples of Haiti, Pakistan, China, Chile and all other countries where major weather patterns have wreaked havoc. Suriname is of the opinion that all nations should effectively and adequately contribute to the alleviation of the dire needs of our fellow citizens of the world. These people deserve more than expressions of sympathy; they deserve to see that promises made to them are kept.

Finally, we want to share our thoughts on the structural causes of poverty and the resulting ill effects on societies. My Government believes that education related to survival skills and production is the only way to effectively eradicate poverty. Money given to poor people for the sake of one's own conscience is an absolute waste. Accordingly, we ask ourselves whether we should continue to use the phraseology "fighting poverty" or should instead start talking about pursuing wealth. Therefore, the slogan of my country in our lingua franca is: "Broko a pina, tek yu gudu", which means "Break away from poverty, by pursuing wealth".

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Suriname for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Desiré Delano Bouterse, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Malam Bacai Sanhá, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will hear an address by the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Malam Bacai Sanhá, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Malam Bacai Sanhá, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Sanhá (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): First, I congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election to preside over the Assembly at this sixty-fifth session. I am convinced that our work will be crowned with success thanks to his proven competence and experience.

To the former President, Mr. Ali Treki, I express my recognition of the wise manner in which he conducted the Assembly's work during its sixty-fourth session.

My compliments also go to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and the entire United Nations team, the women and men who, on our behalf

and on behalf of the nations and peoples of the world, work throughout the four corners of the planet to preserve human dignity, in which are expressed the values of peace and security, resulting in the development of friendly relations among nations and in international cooperation. To them all I express our respect and admiration for their courage and selflessness.

Similarly, I congratulate the Assembly on the recent adoption of resolution 65/1, on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, 10 years after their adoption. This important document will certainly create a new climate for the achievement of the eight Goals by 2015.

My compliments to all those present are also extended on behalf of the people of my country, which just yesterday, 24 September, celebrated its thirty-seventh year as a sovereign, independent State. The country has undergone a series of transformations, but we must recognize that there remains much to be desired in terms of meeting legitimate aspirations for social and economic progress. Such progress would translate into improved quality of life and well-being for our combatant people, on whose behalf Amílcar Cabral spoke from this rostrum more than 40 years ago, in an historic statement in the fight against colonial domination.

Thus at the present session, when the peoples of the world meet to evaluate the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals and to define new strategies to achieve them by 2015, Guinea-Bissau is still dealing with essential, basic factors for the achievement of goals that are so fair and that everyone deserves: stability, peace and security.

Less than a year ago we dealt with tragic events that had a major impact on Guinea-Bissau's internal and external image and led to early presidential elections, which exactly a year and seven days ago resulted in my starting to guide the country's destiny. The heinous acts to which I refer were unanimously condemned. The international community supported the country in its efforts to prepare and hold elections which ultimately were considered to be free, fair and transparent, and at the same time to consolidate peace and internal security, particularly with reforms of public administration, of defence and security and of judicial power, and with support for the State budget.

There was a positive trend in projecting the image of the country and dealing with new challenges: the promotion of internal and institutional dialogue; the mobilization of development partners; the organization of a high-level meeting in New York; and the preparation of a planned donors' round table, scheduled to be held before the end of this year, to discuss the development of Guinea-Bissau.

Unfortunately, that trend contrasted with the incident of 1 April this year, which of course was to be condemned. The handling of the incident and its consequences did not receive the understanding of all the partners of Guinea-Bissau, despite the country's authority having been maintained with a dynamic harmonization at the local, bilateral, regional and international levels. In this world body, let me appeal to all our partners to proceed in the same spirit of friendship, solidarity, assistance and cooperation with our people and their democratically elected institutions, because it is now, in our current circumstances, that our country most needs such support.

The reform that we desire in our defence and security sector, for which we have sought international assistance, has become a matter of prime urgency and extreme sensitivity. The main target is the very men and women who 40 years ago bartered their youth and education — in other words, their future — for our national liberation: the same armed forces who were then so applauded and admired for their determination and courage in forging the freedom and independence of the peoples of Guinea and Cape Verde, as well as for their intervention in other theatres of war, following their international vocation. Today, an appropriate structure to attend to their basic needs is lacking, resulting in an erosion of dignity already won, and thus in a threat to the peace, stability and well-being of our people.

Another consideration is that Guinea-Bissau has an insular platform comprising more than 80 islands and reefs, where a confluence of favourable waters and winds creates an ideal microclimate for much of the world's fauna, in what could and should be a true paradise. Instead, due to an assumed inability of the authorities to exercise effective control, there is a risk that it may become a sanctuary of evil-doers who use and abuse the space and the local people, leading to a regrettable situation, giving us a terrible reputation and

potentially compromising the proper functioning of Government institutions.

The Assembly may find those facts frightening and deserving of condemnation. They are tragic and completely alien to the people of my country. A coordinated regional and global response is needed in order to take advantage of all the synergies that can be mobilized.

However, to this body of nations, of which we are proud to be an integral part, we bring more than a lament in the hope of an appropriate response not only commensurate with the problems but at the level of the capacity that mankind has already demonstrated. We are making our contribution as a people that is confident, mobilized and determined, a people proud of its past and determined to reverse the current situation. We bring a guarantee of multifaceted involvement in harmonizing an extensive internal dialogue, whose foundations we have just laid jointly with the Guinean parliament: an initiative on ways to consolidate peace and development. This will culminate with a conference on national reconciliation, to restore the promise of a positive and lasting commitment.

Despite the current serious situation, for which we take full responsibility, we have never confused our internal problems with those of our friends, and we take great pride in our present stable relations with our neighbours. Similarly, we are proud of the peaceful spirit of our people, who never blame others for our own problems and do not feel any animosity towards the thousands of world citizens who continue to choose our country as a place in which to settle.

During the period of instability we have nonetheless preserved some 15 per cent of our territory as a protected area and nature reserve, as has been highlighted in particular by international organizations such as UNESCO, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and others. That is a major contribution to meeting the universal concern for the preservation of biological and ecological balance in this International Year of Biodiversity, within the context of severe climate change that affects us all.

So, we call urgently for the solidarity and support that Member States can give my people. We appreciate and express the warmest gratitude for the attention we have received from our regional organization, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), headed by Nigeria, in the form not only of

stabilization initiatives, but also of concrete support for Government programmes. We similarly salute the follow-up and attention provided by the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, which shows a spirit of determination at the bilateral and multilateral levels, as evidenced by the restoration of a climate of trust conducive to peace, stability and development.

Within the same framework, we salute the contribution of Portugal and Brazil, again at both the bilateral and multilateral levels, to keeping the world's attention focused on giving Guinea-Bissau another chance. This extends to various other countries and institutions that maintain with us a relationship based on partnership and cooperation. I think particularly of Senegal, Libya, China, Cuba, the United States, France, Algeria, Morocco and South Africa, among others, as well as ECOWAS, the African Union and the European Union, along with the United Nations itself, through the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

The unstable internal socio-political environment that I have outlined has a negative impact on management of my country's public finances, despite the Executive's great and broadly acknowledged efforts. This means that our financial situation is very difficult, despite some recovery in our growth rate, which stood at 2.7 per cent in 2007 and 3.5 per cent in 2008.

The international crisis of 2009 had a small direct impact, and the country registered growth of 3 per cent thanks to a good agricultural year. The increase in international basic commodity prices in 2008 accelerated inflation, which reached an annual average of 10.4 per cent, though it retreated in 2009. The good performance in 2008-2009 in the export of cashew nuts, representing 90 per cent of exports, led to an improvement in the balance of payments, including donations.

However, the external debt burden continued to be unsustainable. At the end of 2009 it was equivalent to 126 per cent of the corrected gross domestic product and 640 per cent of exports of goods and services. The fact that we were unable to complete the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative resulted in an accumulation of delays in paying the external debt.

In 2008 the Government concluded with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) a post-conflict programme, later extended to 2009, which successive

IMF missions evaluated as being broadly satisfactory. Hence, on 7 May this year the IMF Executive Board approved a three-year agreement with my country based on a credit facility which will cover the period 2010-2012.

The public administration of Guinea-Bissau has earned a very positive evaluation by the IMF and the World Bank, which reflects the extraordinary effort in fulfilling the programmatic targets set with regard to cleaning up public finances and regularizing major expenses. Therefore, it is essential that partners show no hesitation that might jeopardize the fulfilment of the decision-point requirements of the HIPC Initiative.

We are coming to the end of the first decade of the millennium, which had been declared a decade of globalization, with the promotion of a lasting peace and aimed at a new international order. We cannot slide backwards, nor can we show weakness in the face of the challenge that we have set ourselves in addressing problems such as migration, human trafficking and the trafficking of organs and trying to find ethically acceptable responses to them.

We support the efforts being made to resolve the conflicts in the Middle East, through coexistence of a Palestinian State with the State of Israel. Our membership of the Alliance of Civilizations and of the Community of Democracies in particular is based on the rules of peaceful coexistence among ethnicities and religions, and on the promotion of human rights.

We support global efforts to rehabilitate Haiti and we also follow with great attention and interest the process that will lead to the restructuring of the Security Council. We hope that this will result in a more equitable representation of the world and be a factor in the ascent of the African continent towards peace, democracy and development.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Malam Bacai Sanhá, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

**Address by Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed,
President of the Transitional Federal Government of
the Somali Republic**

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic.

Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ahmed (*spoke in Arabic*): On the grand occasion of the general debate of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, I congratulate the new President of the Assembly, Mr. Joseph Deiss, who is known for his political skills and wise leadership. I would also like to extend my appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, for the able manner in which he led our work. I hope this session will end successfully and produce recommendations and resolutions that will serve humanity and the world at large.

I further thank the Secretary-General for his strong and genuine interest in and commitment to addressing the critical international issues facing the world, and Somalia in particular.

This annual gathering brings together world leaders and their representatives in order to highlight positive and praiseworthy accomplishments and developments, and to identify common global challenges, emerging problems and their causes, and consequently to discuss and seek appropriate solutions for them.

This meeting comes at a critical moment, when our contemporary world faces a series of challenges ranging from economic crises to natural disasters and bloody wars that threaten international peace and stability, as well as other international issues that require timely resolutions and serious work from the

General Assembly to design strategies to avoid them in the future.

In our world today, known for its technological advancement and modern science, we are confronted by many challenges resulting from climate change, global warming and their effects, such as devastating floods, drought, forest fires, landslides, desertification, earthquakes, snow storms and so on. Such environmental problems have occurred recently in many countries, including the violent floods in Pakistan and China and the destructive forest fires in Russia, alongside other problems worldwide. We feel great compassion for the countries affected by these natural disasters, and we must cooperate with and provide them the assistance they need while we express our grief and condolences for their suffering.

A few centuries ago, the peoples of the world suffered from the horror of colonial slavery, injustice and oppressive cultures in which the strong preyed on the weak, as well as from horrific wars that spared nothing. It was through the collective will of victorious nations around the world that this fine institution was established in 1945 in order to ensure lasting peace and security and to protect human rights, the sovereignty of nations and the rights of people to self-determination, as well as justice, freedom of thought and expression.

However, 65 years since its inception, we must ask ourselves whether the world is more secure or nations are more at peace with one another. Has humankind attained its ambition of a good life, development and sustainable prosperity? The answer, clearly, is no. We see destructive wars being fought throughout the world, causing the suffering of millions, as well as the horrors of global terrorism, especially in the developing world.

Somalia is the weaker link in this scenario and therefore suffers from the worst kinds of international terrorism perpetrated, *inter alia*, by Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaida and the foreign criminal elements supporting them. Al-Qaida boasted of its responsibility for the horrible acts that occurred in Mogadishu on 3 December 2009 at the Benadir University graduation ceremony, where many graduating doctors died at a time when the country needed them most. Professors, ministers, families and guests also died at that ceremony.

Other heinous acts include the explosion at the Muna Hotel, the African Union headquarters in Mogadishu, as well as the explosion in Kampala, Uganda, which killed over 70 innocent people who had come to watch the World Cup match that was then taking place in South Africa.

These beastly massacres carried out by Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaida terrorists turn the stomach of any person with a conscience. This movement carries out such acts in Mogadishu and other Somali cities on a daily basis, in plain public sight and in places of worship, killing Somali civilians, hacking off their limbs, hands and ears and cutting their throats. It has also carried out unspeakable crimes against humanity, such as cutting off the heads of victims and disposing of them somewhere else. It has also committed rape and theft and caused great damage to property.

This movement does not believe in Somalia as a nation and does not support the creation of a national Government in Somalia; rather, it seeks to establish the Horn of Africa as a terrorist hub that is managed by its Al-Qaida partners and whose intention is to wreak havoc on the entire region and the world beyond.

Besides terrorism on land, another type of terrorism — piracy, perpetrated by pirates and extremist movements in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean — threatens navigation and sea trade. Maritime terrorism is no less dangerous than land-based terrorism; many United Nations Member States have had their ships hijacked by pirates who attack merchant or passenger vessels and then blackmail them and demand millions in ransom. While military convoys attempt to protect shipping in the Indian Ocean, they are unable to uproot this ongoing threat or eliminate its root causes.

There is a close connection between those pirates and armed extremist elements in Somalia. Such ships can be destroyed at any time and their crews killed rather than be held for ransom. All of this, again, requires a solution to the problems in Somalia, because the root causes of these problems lie not at sea but on land. No partial solution to the problems of Somalia can succeed no matter how strong and effective it is; only a comprehensive solution of these problems will work.

The President returned to the Chair.

I would also like to draw attention to a phenomenon even more dangerous to the Somalis in the long term than piracy. This is illegal fishing and the dumping of toxic waste along the Somali coast, which harm the health of Somalia's citizens and its environment. We have already begun to see symptoms and illnesses that did not previously exist in Somalia.

One function of the General Assembly is to deal with hotbeds of tension and threats to international peace and security. I therefore appeal to world leaders to stand together in confronting the threat of international terrorism, including Al-Qaida and Al-Shabaab, as well as organized crime. We must eliminate this scourge so that it will not expand and worsen, and bear in mind that any delay or compromise will provide further opportunities for terrorism, prolong its life and allow it to spread. Beyond this, we need to solve the political, economic and social root causes of terrorism locally, regionally and internationally.

After many years of dispute and conflict, the Somali parties met in Djibouti and reached an agreement, endorsed by the international community, that led to the creation of a broad-based national Government that included all the conflicting parties who participated in the Djibouti peace conference. This Government has inherited a heavy burden and many challenges and obstacles, but it has managed to shoulder those responsibilities. However, it continues to wage a bitter struggle against such hostile elements as Al-Qaida and its allies, Al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam.

Here, we should note that the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), while only in its second year, has managed to counter and repel these enemy attacks and to achieve reconciliation and several agreements with members of Hizbul Islam and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a. Thus the TFG has achieved some success in its goals, especially following its recent ministerial change, which brought in members of Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a, who have been assigned important ministerial positions in the new Government. I note that the national reconciliation achieved in Djibouti remains a strategic choice for us, and we reach out to all those who desire peace and security in Somalia.

We have also formed strategic plans in the areas of politics, security and social reform. We must produce a public budget for 2010 that covers

economic, political and social affairs and State management expenses, as well as reconstruction. We must rehabilitate Government ministries and institutions and economic structures, such as the central bank, and encourage a free-market economy. We must provide food and humanitarian assistance to the needy and those displaced by river floodings, drought or desertification. This plan has been particularly difficult to implement because the Al-Shabaab movement has blocked the distribution of humanitarian aid and food to the areas it controls, and has raided and stolen from aid organizations and hijacked vehicles carrying food intended for the hungry.

We must further create opportunities to empower young people to play leadership roles, and furnish them with the skills necessary to manage Government institutions. We need to increase the skills and abilities of Government employees and foster a spirit of sacrifice for the homeland and devotion to work and transparency in conducting the country's business. We must build capacity in the security sector and train police and security forces to protect the Somali people and their independence and territorial integrity. We need to prepare a permanent constitution that can serve as the foundation for law, democracy and the guarantee of basic human freedoms. The constitution will be submitted for a referendum so that it can be applied as soon as possible. We must revitalize our judicial institutions and train judges and legal assistants, as well as reconstruct and rehabilitate support centres such as police stations, criminal courts and prisons. We should create an environment conducive to dialogue, reconciliation, negotiation and collective work, and halt the continuing violence in Somalia, which has lasted more than two decades now, so that peace and security can be restored. Finally, we must end the internal disputes that continue to erupt within our national institutions — for instance, among members of Parliament — and resolve them peacefully.

These are but a few of the issues that we have selected from among the many on which our strategic plans are focused. However, a shortage of funds, resources and expertise hinders the TFG from implementing many of them. From this rostrum, I appeal to the world's leaders and the international community to continue to come forward to help us stop the bloodshed in Somalia and to provide us with the

emergency assistance necessary to save our citizens and Government, especially in the following areas.

First, in the field of security, the Somali security forces need to be armed and trained in an effective way so that they are capable of taking the security initiative in their country, and provided with the salaries and health care they need if they are to protect citizens and establish Government authority throughout the country.

Second, the African Union forces in Somalia must be strengthened and reinforced by the addition of new forces.

Third, a military strategy must be designed and implemented by the United Nations, including the dispatch of an international force to Somalia with the purpose of restoring security and stability throughout the country.

Fourth, the Security Council should adopt resolutions aimed at saving Somalia and liberating it from Al-Qaida and any other terrorist movements that conspire against the restoration of peace and security there. On the political front, we would also ask for continued United Nations support for the TFG, allowing it to remain a focal point for reconciliation between the various parties in Somalia and the international community. The TFG should also be given the support it needs to discharge its duties and manage its budget, so that it can stand on its own two feet and carry out its economic projects and extend its authority throughout the country.

Fifth, the Somali Government should be assisted in rebuilding the infrastructure that was destroyed in the civil wars.

Sixth, the international community should participate and assist in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Somali State institutions, such as schools, hospitals and educational centres.

Seventh, the Somali economy must be promoted and its faltering institutions developed.

Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to the international community for its assiduous efforts to restore peace and stability in Somalia. Nevertheless, I would like to point out that all that has been offered to date is still not commensurate with what Somalia deserves. Somalia is a country that has lost everything, including its State infrastructure. We hope that the international community will assume its humanitarian

responsibility towards our country and assist in ending its suffering, which has now entered its twenty-first year. It is also our hope that the international community will fulfil its promises and turn its resolutions and recommendations — past and present — into actual, implementable deeds.

I would especially like to thank the Governments of Uganda and Burundi, which have sent their troops to Somalia to bring peace to the situation there. I would also like to thank the Governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the European Union and the brotherly Arab States, as well as the African Union, all of which have contributed to security and stability in my country. Our thanks also go to the international and regional organizations, including the United Nations, for their support. We hope that we will all succeed in restoring security and stability very soon because the continued suffering of the Somali people is unacceptable.

In conclusion, I pray to God that the efforts of this session of the General Assembly will be crowned with success and that Somalia will attend the next session having resolved its chronic crisis.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Silajdžić: It is an honour to address the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. Allow me to express my gratitude to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for having ably presided over this body during the past year and to congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on being elected the new President of the General Assembly.

Fifteen years ago, the Dayton Peace Agreement ended the aggression in and brought peace to Bosnia and Herzegovina. My country has come a long way since then, and I feel obliged to thank the Governments, organizations and individuals who assisted us in travelling down this road.

When we asked the General Assembly to support us in becoming a member of the Security Council, it honoured us with almost unanimous support, for which we offer our thanks. That support demonstrated that the Assembly holds Bosnia and Herzegovina in high esteem, and we are proud of that. As a member of the Security Council, we are doing our best to meet the Assembly's expectations and honour its trust.

Thanks to the generous assistance of many Governments represented here, Bosnia and Herzegovina completed the main process of reconstruction relatively quickly, particularly in the light of the level of devastation. But the rebuilding of our devastated society has proved to be much more difficult. From 1992 to 1995, an age-old, genuinely multicultural society in Bosnia and Herzegovina was brutally and intentionally torn apart by force. Half of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina had to leave their homes in order to save their lives. Some 1,300,000 of them remain outside Bosnia and Herzegovina. Systematic obstructions were the cause of failure of return programmes, and they are still an obstacle to those who want to return. Those who made it back to their homes are often confronted with blockade walls or with outright violations of basic rights. That makes the restoration of our pluralist society the single most difficult task ahead of us.

But hope remains that the upcoming constitutional changes will lay a foundation for the new generation to be able to bridge the divides. No matter what, we will continue to revive the pluralist character and tolerant spirit of our society because we strongly believe that cultural pluralism is humankind's most precious treasure.

A healthy economy can be a powerful tool for achieving that goal. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a

country rich in water and other energy-generating resources. We have undertaken studies and invited international investors to participate in developing these resources. Once completed, these projects will be the driving engine of our economy, enabling us to make progress in other areas, such as health care and social services.

We continue to develop our infrastructure and agricultural resources, but not at a desirable pace. Although generally improved, our education system remains in some aspects hostage to divisive political influences. On the other hand, our rising trade activities have resulted in improving our relations with the countries in the region, and great opportunities can be unlocked through more intensive and more confident regional cooperation.

As is the case in other societies, our greatest resource is our youth, educated in our country and abroad, and ready to take over once our economy is able to absorb their skills and talents. I am confident that, in the coming years, employment opportunities will grow in proportion to the development of the vast untapped resources of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Defence reform is commonly seen as one of our greatest post-Dayton successes because it resulted in unified, modern armed forces. Here again, we have to express our appreciation to our friends and allies whose assistance made this achievement possible. In a short amount of time, our armed forces have managed to earn the trust and respect of the United Nations through their participation in peacekeeping missions.

Like everywhere else, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina desire peace, stability and prosperity, as well as a better future for themselves and their children. There is great potential for development, and opportunities are there to be seized. Yes, there are reasons for optimism, but there are reasons for concern too.

Our progress is hindered by the remnants of those who still believe in the completion of the political project that brought catastrophe not only to Bosnia and Herzegovina, but to the whole region. In short, they think that the world has forgotten the atrocities committed against the civilian population, the concentration camps, the rape camps and the genocide. After hundreds of thousands of non-Serb civilians were killed and expelled from one part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, they are now publicly calling for the

secession of that part. They hope and dream, as they say, that the world will somehow recognize that entity as an independent State. Instead of feeling shame, these disciples of Milošević, Karadžić and Ratko Mladić are now ready to come and ask the international community to reward the genocide in Srebrenica, Prijedor, Zvornik, Sarajevo, Mostar and other sites of horrific crimes for which Karadžić is now being tried at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague. What a monument to inhumanity that would be!

Of course, they will not succeed. They can no longer count on the mighty armies of Slobodan Milošević because those armies were defeated through our heroic struggle. They do count on, as they say, favourable geopolitical circumstances. But they fail to take one thing into account, as Milošević did. Bosnia will be defended.

They will, however, continue obstructing progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and they will continue destabilizing the region. They found inspiration in the inadequate response of the international community, whose patience they have been testing for the past 15 years. So, our collective resolve to prevent the escalation and opening of fresh wounds in Bosnia and Herzegovina is being tested again. We must not fail this time.

This dangerous adventurism aside, I believe and I know that the train of progress cannot and will not be stopped. There is no doubt in my mind that Bosnia and Herzegovina and our entire region will maintain stability and achieve prosperity in the coming years, thus fulfilling the dreams and desires of every one of our citizens.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

Address by Mr. Borut Pahor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia.

Mr. Borut Pahor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Borut Pahor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Pahor (Slovenia): I am indeed honoured to address this Assembly for the first time as Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia. I reaffirm my country's commitment to the United Nations and its Charter.

Let me also congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We all rely on your political wisdom and experience, and I assure you of my country's utmost support in the coming weeks and months.

In the past few years, numerous national leaders have spoken in this very Assembly about new global challenges that threaten our security, prosperity and freedom. There is a general consensus that more effective and coordinated global action is required to address such challenges. For Slovenia, strengthening global governance means renewing our common commitment to multilateralism and its principles of inclusion, legitimacy and transparency.

The United Nations must keep its place at the core of global governance structures. However, this Organization also needs to adapt to the contemporary reality of an interconnected world and the resulting new challenges and threats. As many of my colleagues have already said, reform of the United Nations has been long undervalued. The composition of the Security Council is visibly out of date and the work of the General Assembly needs revitalization. Progress in peacekeeping reform would strengthen all other United Nations activities relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, including preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peacebuilding.

The reforms of international economic and financial systems must continue at an accelerated pace, reflecting global development needs. Our endeavours should aim at increasing accountability, responsibility and solidarity, while taking into account the need for a

stronger voice for and better participation of developing countries, which should be fully included in the international response to the crisis. Together, we must build a world in which economic indicators are not the only measure of a prosperous society. Human, social and environmental values should also become principal elements of our criteria. In this connection, I encourage closer cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions and between the United Nations and the Group of 20 in finding the best possible responses to the crisis and in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable.

It is unfortunate that, as a result of far-reaching developments, we continue to face an even greater challenge in climate change. Indeed, the past year has been a year of lost opportunities. However, this should not be a reason to lower our ambitions. Climate change is real, the loss of biodiversity is unprecedented and the consequences are already being felt by far too many people around the world. In some cases, the very existence of individual countries, States Members of the United Nations, is at stake. This year, we must do better and do more in Cancun to reach a comprehensive post-2012 climate agreement that will limit global warming to below 2°C, as stated in the Copenhagen Accord, and improve adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change. Our responsibilities differ, but we must all shoulder our share of the common burden.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the countries of Western Europe decided to open their ranks to the States of Central and Eastern Europe. This decision was instrumental in building a modern Europe of key democratic values. The choice of enlargement of Euro-Atlantic institutions was thus a choice for stability on the continent.

Unfortunately, the financial and economic crisis and international debates in many European States pushed aside some of the topics that are important and of strategic interest to the continent as a whole. The need for a continued process of enlargement of the European Union and NATO is one of them. I would therefore like to underline that the commitment to enlargement to the Western Balkans needs to be honoured, and all the more so since the situation in the region today has changed for the better. Obvious and tangible progress has been made.

In this connection, I would like to recall that only a couple of weeks ago this Assembly adopted

resolution 64/298 by consensus, acknowledging the content of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which was rendered in response to a submitted request on the issue of the declaration of independence of Kosovo. I am particularly glad that the resolution paved the way for dialogue, which the European Union is ready to facilitate. It is the historic responsibility of the democratically elected leaders of the countries of the Western Balkans to pursue reconciliation and the rebuilding of mutual trust.

In order to promote the necessary confidence, I therefore decided, together with the Prime Minister of Croatia, to launch the so-called Brdo process several months ago in Slovenia. I think the results and consequences of this decision have so far been very good. Our aim is to encourage dialogue and cooperation among the political leaders with a view to discussing mutual support and further steps on the road to the Euro-Atlantic integration of the entire region. I believe that we are on the right track, and we will continue to work in this direction.

Slovenia plays an active role in the international community and takes its responsibilities seriously. I would therefore like to confirm once again our dedication to our candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, for the period of 2012-2013, at the elections to be held next year in this Assembly. Slovenia views its candidature as an opportunity to contribute further to the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as the peaceful settlement of disputes. We intend to build on our international commitments and experience gained in recent years. We are committed to upholding the rule of law, respect for human rights, international law and international humanitarian law, and we continue to foster open and transparent international dialogue in the spirit of cooperation and consensus-building.

Our candidature therefore underscores the great significance Slovenia attaches to the role of the United Nations in an increasingly interdependent and complex world. Furthermore, it indicates Slovenia's desire to utilize its rich multilateral experience to enhance the goals and principles of this universal, international Organization.

Finally, let me say once more how honoured I am, as the Prime Minister of Slovenia, to be present in this Assembly. Extraordinary historical circumstances have shaped the development of my country, which

therefore attaches great importance to the constant promotion of the noble purposes and principles of international relations, as defined in the Charter of the United Nations. I am therefore all the more pleased to have been able to participate in the general debate devoted to the reaffirmation of the central role of this Organization in global governance.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Borut Pahor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. José Socrates, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic.

Mr. José Socrates, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. José Socrates, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Socrates (Portugal) (*spoke in Portuguese; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): I wish to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly. The Assembly is the central body of the United Nations architecture. Here, all Member States are truly represented and each has a vote, irrespective of its size, population or economic power. Here is where the central decisions that determine the functioning of the other bodies are made. Here, we are all permanent members, embodying the principle of the sovereign equality of all States.

Here in the General Assembly, Portugal is guided by the objective of doing its best to strengthen the United Nations. There are no true alternatives to the Organization. Its unique role in managing international relations is more evident than ever, and it is our duty to further enhance this role in order to attain a progressive and solid strengthening of the United Nations. I repeat, there are no alternative mechanisms to the United Nations. For this reason, all Member States should work to reinvigorate the Organization.

Portugal is guided by the principles of national independence, respect for human rights, equality among States, peaceful solutions to conflicts and international cooperation as the main elements that drive development and the progress of humankind. These principles are all inscribed in the Portuguese Constitution.

These are also the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Allow me to underline some of them, which today are more important than ever: maintaining international peace and security, the development and progress of all peoples, friendly relations among all nations based on sovereign equality, international cooperation in solving economic, cultural and humanitarian crises and the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The maintenance of international peace and security, is surely one of the noblest of our objectives. The Charter defines the way we, the United Nations, should act together to prevent or remove threats to peace and how to respond to acts of aggression or other violations of our universal principles.

Portugal has been an active contributor to United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations in Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania. Our efforts have always been global and generous. Tens of thousands of Portuguese have participated in peace operations. We are now present in places as diverse as Afghanistan, South Lebanon, Timor-Leste, the Western Balkans, Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations and other missions according to our means and, quite frequently, above and beyond what our size, would require. Nevertheless, we continue doing it with the firm conviction that collective security calls for collective efforts. Moreover, the United Nations can continue to count on the Portuguese contribution to this collective endeavour.

Looking at the present challenges to international peace and security, allow me to refer to the situation in the Middle East, a conflict involving many negative influences in the relations between several peoples and cultures. The coming year will be critical to the peace process. The choice is clear: peace or a return to instability.

We welcome the return to direct negotiations aimed at reaching a two-State solution. We all have to

join efforts for the creation of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side, in mutual peace and security, with the State of Israel.

I would also like to mention Afghanistan where the international community has assumed a firm commitment to support reconstruction and development. The results of the Kabul Conference will have to be complemented at the upcoming NATO summit in Lisbon, with a view to ensuring a sustainable transition process, mainly led by the Afghans themselves.

International peace and security require effective multilateral action among United Nations bodies. Effective multilateralism needs to be based on working structures with which every Member State feels comfortable. The United Nations is indispensable. It alone is capable of confronting global threats, it alone has the capacity to respond to acute natural disasters, as we have seen in several recent situations, like the Haitian earthquake or the Pakistan floods, and it alone can effectively shelter and feed millions of refugees worldwide, thanks to the outstanding work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, led by António Guterres, one of the most distinguished Portuguese political leaders.

It is especially urgent to reform the United Nations and to adapt it to today's international realities. Any reform must be based on the objectives that inspired its creation. Its pivotal place at the centre of the international architecture has to be preserved, for the United Nations is the only forum where no one feels excluded, the only body where all States, including small and medium-sized countries, have their own voice and their own say in solving global problems.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission — an idea put forward by Portugal — was a significant step in the reform process. But we also have to look at the Security Council with a view to its enlargement. I sincerely believe that we can all succeed in reshaping the Council and making it more representative, more efficient and more transparent.

Mr. Ould Hadrami (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In our view, it is illogical that countries like Brazil or India, which have an irreplaceable role in today's international economic and political life, are still not permanent members of the Security Council.

Africa, as well, has to be considered in this enlargement of the permanent membership. It is of the utmost importance that Africa be fairly treated, given the remarkable political and economic progress we all have witnessed on that vast continent — continent with which Portugal feels a permanent affinity. It is only natural that we have been so closely linked to the strengthening of relations between Africa and the Europe Union (EU), having hosted the summit in Lisbon where the Joint Africa-EU Strategy was designed. We are now looking forward to the third Africa-EU summit.

The implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is urgent. Let me congratulate the Secretary-General and the members of the General Assembly on the results achieved at the recent High-level Meeting. We are firmly committed to applying the agreed political vision to mobilize efforts to meet the targets over the next five years.

International stability cannot be achieved and maintained without economic and social prosperity worldwide. The present economic and financial situation shows that we all benefit from common solutions to global problems. In this context, I call for a reinforced participation of developing countries and regional groupings and communities in ongoing debates, including the reform of the international financial organizations and their interaction with the United Nations system.

Another field where interdependence urges us to act jointly is climate change. It is a matter of survival. We shall do our part to ensure that the Cancun summit is a step in the right direction. Portugal has consistently worked to reduce its carbon footprint by investing solidly in renewable energy. I am proud to be able to announce that we have already met the target that my country announced here last year. Portugal is already producing 45 per cent of its electricity from local renewable sources, and by 2020 it intends to reach 66 per cent. It now holds the fifth place in Europe — and in the world — in terms of use of renewable energy. It has the largest wind park in Europe — and the second largest in the world — and it holds the record for the highest amount of wind energy

generated. It has the largest photovoltaic park in the world and is a leader in the area of electric vehicles. Portugal is now considered one of the 10 most promising countries for energy investment.

Portugal has been sharing this experience and this knowledge with a number of developing countries, and we continue to intensify this cooperation through concrete partnerships and technology transfer and knowledge, supporting efforts towards adaptation and mitigation, in accordance with the commitments made in Copenhagen. Some of our partners are least developed countries and small island developing States. They are among those that pollute the least but suffer the most from climate change. It is urgent that the international community take the necessary measures to reduce their vulnerability.

This year marks the beginning of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification. Portugal recognizes the right to water, as well as the right to education, adequate housing and health. Ensuring that every human being has access to drinking water and adequate sanitation is also a good way of accelerating the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

My country, an independent State for almost 1,000 years, commemorates this year the centennial of the Portuguese Republic. We are today a democracy with solid credentials in terms of human rights and their promotion worldwide. We firmly believe in the rule of law and have learned through our own experience that peace and prosperity are attainable only when they are truly and freely shared by all States.

Portugal is also a country that is accustomed to listening to its partners. We are members of the European Union, the Atlantic Alliance, and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, currently presided over by Angola, which I congratulate. Portuguese is the fifth most widely spoken language in the world and is present on all continents. Portugal also participates in the Alliance of Civilizations, a forum that is at the forefront of the much-needed intercultural dialogue among regions, which is ably led by Jorge Sampaio, former President of my country.

Portugal's action at the United Nations is rooted in our capacity for open dialogue with every Member State and in our ability to build bridges and forge consensus. We always seek to defend our values

through dialogue, not by imposing our views. Our attitude is not driven by any temporary need to please some constituencies. We aspire to be judged by our actions. This is our motivation for seeking active participation in all United Nations bodies for which the composition is rotational.

This universal vision of dialogue and openness to the world characterizes our current candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council.

We belong to the United Nations because we strongly believe in its values, objectives and universality; because we maintain that mutual respect should be the cornerstone of international action; and because we think that the strengthening of the United Nations and its activities is surely one of the most noble and idealistic objectives of all those who, like the Heads of State and Government participating here, strive each and every day to achieve a better world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. José Socrates, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Balkenende (Netherlands): The Headquarters of the United Nations is currently undergoing a major renovation, and that is a good thing. It is good because the building no longer meets the requirements of the new century. In the meantime, work goes on as usual,

and here we all are, discussing the big issues of the day.

Of course, the parallel is obvious. The United Nations system itself has now reached a certain age and is also in need of renovation. And in this sense, too, the day-to-day work of the United Nations must go on, for we cannot afford to take a break from tackling the global problems we face. The United Nations may be under renovation, but it still has to stay open for business.

It was 65 years ago that the United Nations was established in San Francisco. There, and at Bretton Woods, the world's leaders laid the foundations for a multilateral system that would be built upon the smoking ruins of the Second World War. This system has demonstrated its usefulness, but it is based on post-war realities, not on the international balance of power and the global problems of today.

I use the word "renovation", because we do not need to build from scratch. Over the past 65 years, the system has more than proved its worth. There is nothing wrong with the foundations or the basic structure. Besides, experience has taught us that a practical step-by-step approach is a more effective way to reform a large organization than reliance on a "big-bang" strategy. Or, as Dag Hammarskjöld, one of the great leaders of the United Nations, put it, "Constant attention by a good nurse may be just as important as a major operation by a surgeon".

Today, I would like to look briefly at three of the core tasks of the United Nations in order to show how the Dutch Government views various concrete reforms in practical terms. Those tasks relate to human rights, the international legal order, and peace and security. Let me begin, however, with the background to these renovations, using my own experience as a guide, starting with the question of why they are necessary.

In human terms, 65 years is often an age at which we start to take things easier. Unfortunately, that is not an option for the United Nations, for despite all our efforts, peace, security, legal certainty and development are still not guaranteed for everyone. In fact, since the United Nations was established, the global challenges facing us have only grown larger. Consider the climate crisis, or the energy and food crisis, or the international economic crisis that has shown so clearly how closely connected everything is in our time. We need each other more than ever before,

and we need the United Nations as the organization uniting us more than ever before.

In this light, I applaud the choice of theme for this sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly: "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance" — although I must confess I would have replaced the word "reaffirming" with "recovering", because ground has clearly been lost, as has become especially apparent in the last few years. The Group of 20, and not the United Nations, has taken the lead in tackling the economic crisis, for example. The United Nations Climate Change Conference could have delivered more if the world had been able to unite behind the tough decisions. And where the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are concerned, we see mixed results. A lot has been achieved, but on some Goals we are lagging far behind, thanks to a fragmented and defective international aid architecture. We discussed this earlier in the week at the MDG summit.

What these examples show is that the United Nations is losing its position — and its convening power — as the obvious global platform for discussion and decision-making. It pains me to say that. However, I also have every faith that the United Nations can continue in the future to claim its vital role as the world's overarching governance organization.

In my view, the end of the cold war freed the United Nations from a long period of confrontation and stagnation. In its wake the international agenda was redefined with great speed and vigour. Relatively new topics like the environment and climate change, social themes and gender issues began to claim our attention. The international legal order was strengthened by new international tribunals, the International Criminal Court and a growing number of peace missions under the United Nations flag — and of course, in setting the MDGs at its Millennium Summit (resolution 55/2), the United Nations showed how ambitious it can be.

The United Nations is only able to achieve such things because every country is involved and everyone has a voice. That is the power of the United Nations, but also its greatest weakness. Inclusion does not only foster legitimacy — the unique selling point of the United Nations. It also leads to sluggish decision-making, politicized relationships and a bureaucratic structure that lacks transparency. I believe that anyone

familiar with the international circuit over the past 10 years will recognize this picture.

It is often said, "If the United Nations did not exist it would have to be invented" — and indeed, a global organization with universal membership is essential. Still, no matter how representative an organization may be, it will lose its relevance if it does not deliver sufficient results. In short, legitimacy and effectiveness are two sides of the same coin.

The Dutch Government is convinced that the United Nations can improve its effectiveness and decisiveness and so increase its legitimacy and public support. This can be done by utilizing the United Nations and its process to solve problems and by putting practical considerations first when problems are tackled. The Netherlands wants to see that happen and will work to make it happen. We will do so as a founding Member of the United Nations but also together with our partners in the European Union, of which we also are a founding member. The European Union is strongly committed to the United Nations, and we subscribe to its contributions to secure the future of the United Nations.

That brings me to the first of the three core tasks I mentioned at the start of my speech: human rights. This, without question, is an area in which the United Nations has achieved great success in setting standards, with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as an unshakeable basis. Unfortunately, though, it still falls short in enforcing those standards. We still hear reports every day of torture, unfair trials, curbs on freedom of expression and other human rights violations. The Dutch Government considers it unacceptable that people, often women, are still being stoned to death in 2010. We must continue to resist this practice with every ounce of our being.

The Dutch Government urges that the capacity of the human rights machinery, and particularly the Human Rights Council, be strengthened. To start with, a clear division of tasks between the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of this General Assembly is needed. Overlap and lack of clarity make it too easy for some regimes to distract attention from human rights violations. The Netherlands will press for clarity.

Of course, human rights are closely related to the international legal order, the second area I want to touch on. As you know, this is a subject very close to

the Netherlands' heart. The city of The Hague is not only the centre of Dutch democracy, it is also known as the legal capital of the world — and we are proud of that. More important, though, of course, is the fact that the international institutions based in The Hague are sending a clear message with the work they undertake. The international community will not allow human rights violations and crimes against humanity to go unpunished. That applies to the various *ad hoc* tribunals, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. It also applies to the International Court of Justice and of course the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Over the last 20 years international criminal law has developed at an impressive rate. Today, those who commit the most terrible crimes, wherever in the world they may be, know that their chances of being called to account are growing by the day. Now we must act boldly. We must strengthen these institutions' visibility, credibility and authority. We can do that by improving international cooperation on investigations and prosecutions, by increasing compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and by pushing for as many countries as possible to sign the Rome Statute and to conduct themselves according to both its letter and its spirit. With that in mind, I say that it is unacceptable to the Dutch Government that someone like President Al-Bashir of the Sudan, against whom an arrest warrant is outstanding, should be allowed to move freely in a country that is an ICC partner.

In closing, I would like to say a few words about the broad topic of peace and security. At this moment, there are some 100,000 people taking part in United Nations peace missions around the world. So no one can deny that the United Nations plays a leading role in this area — and rightly so, because it is precisely in matters of war and peace that legitimacy and resolve are most essential. Such legitimacy and resolve can only be provided by the United Nations and the Security Council.

We saw only recently, in the incident involving the Republic of Korea's naval ship, the *Cheonan*, how difficult and shaky the position of the Security Council can sometimes be. On the one hand, the Council condemned the attack unanimously and in strong terms, and that has to be applauded. On the other hand, the Council remained silent on the question of blame, which is an extremely hard thing to bear for the survivors and the victims' loved ones.

It is precisely in order to guarantee the legitimacy and strength of the Security Council in the future that the Dutch Government continues to support reforms of the Council that reflect the geopolitical realities of today and not of 1945. Naturally, the exact substance of those reforms is still open to debate. But it is clear to the Netherlands that there should be more room for more countries to join the discussions and exert influence: room for large countries that in 1945 were not yet large enough or were not yet Members of the United Nations; but also room for smaller nations that, as troop-supplying countries or as interested parties in a particular region, should have the right to speak. I would add immediately that countries that want influence should realize that this entails financial, political and moral obligations. Or, in the words of Winston Churchill, the price of greatness is responsibility.

I have briefly sketched why the United Nations is in need of renovation. I hope I have made clear that its relevance is tied not only to its legitimacy but also to its effectiveness. And I have suggested the direction the renovation might take in three specific areas. One thing I have not yet done, however, is to reaffirm that the Netherlands, in keeping with its long international tradition, will continue to work for quality in the United Nations system. Together with others, together with all represented in this Hall, we will work in the knowledge that this renovation, like all our activities, requires us to pool our resources. Or, as the United Nations Charter says: "unite our strength" and "combine our efforts". Let those words inspire us in the work that lies ahead.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation

Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority.

Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Abbas (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me pleasure to congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election to the presidency at this session and to wish him every success in fulfilling his important tasks. We would also like to convey through you, Sir, our thanks to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his valuable efforts during his presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

We would like also to express our thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts in strengthening the role and work of the United Nations and its bodies in various fields. In particular, we greatly appreciate his efforts, and those of the United Nations entities, especially the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which continues to work to provide essential services to Palestinian refugees, who have been waiting for more than 60 years for redress of their plight and the realization of their right to return to their homes and properties.

I am well aware that the agenda of the General Assembly is filled with matters and issues of pressing concern to the entire human race and to our planet, particularly those relating to armed conflict, wars and the struggle of people under foreign occupation to realize their right to self-determination, as well as climate change, global warming, natural disasters and the global economic and financial crises.

All of this is happening at a time when we are witnessing rightful demands for the revitalization of the United Nations, particularly reform of the Security Council aimed at making it more representative and truly reflective of the current international situation. This is especially important in the light of the

emergence of new Powers, which should be represented in the Security Council in order to enhance its role and effectiveness in maintaining international peace and security.

There is also significant discontent over some States' non-compliance with Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. This demands that the international community take vigorous, effective measures to compel those countries to respect and implement these resolutions; to end colonization, occupation and exploitation in our world so as to promote the values of freedom, justice, tolerance and coexistence; and to combat extremism and terrorism. Indeed, the United Nations has a fundamental role to play in promoting cooperative relations among peoples and guiding them towards investment in the development of societies and infrastructure, as well as in fighting poverty, unemployment, desertification, disease and epidemics and the lethal human and environmental risks they pose for humanity and the future of our planet.

Our people, our homeland, Palestine, and our region, the Middle East, are facing extremely serious problems that continue to push them towards violence and conflict, wasting chance after chance to seriously address the issues faced by the peoples of the region and to arrive at comprehensive and bold solutions. This is the result of the expansionist and hegemonic mentality that still prevails in the ideology and policies of Israel, the occupying Power, whose standard policy is non-compliance with internationally legitimate resolutions, including those of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Such disrespect has rendered those resolutions ineffective, undermined the credibility of the United Nations and bolstered the prevailing view that double standards are in effect, particularly regarding the Palestinian question, and that Israel is a State above the law, flouting all these resolutions and engaging in oppression, arrests, detentions, killings, destruction, demolition of homes, blockades, settlement expansion and the establishment of the annexation apartheid wall, violating and undermining the existence and the rights of our people in their own homeland.

The ancient city of East Jerusalem, capital of the independent State of Palestine and designated by UNESCO as a world heritage site requiring protection, is being subjected by Israel, the occupying Power, to actions that alter and distort realities on the ground.

Such actions destroy landmarks, cemeteries and the religious, spiritual and historical identity of the holy city in every aspect and as quickly as possible, aiming to erase its historical character and pre-empt final status negotiations. This is in addition to the continuous excavations under the Al-Aqsa mosque, the demolition of homes, the deportations and revocation of the residency rights of its population and the imposition of a siege on the city in an attempt to isolate it from its natural Palestinian Arab surroundings and to control it geographically and demographically.

This situation is a provocation to our people. It antagonizes them and gives rise to anger, especially in the Arab and Islamic world. It creates instability in our region and constitutes a serious obstacle to the achievement of peace and security. All of these illegal Israeli measures and practices must cease.

This is also the case with regard to the situation in the Gaza Strip, which has been subjected to an unjust, illegal and unprecedented land, air and sea blockade in violation of international law and United Nations resolutions. It is also the target of harsh Israeli military aggression that has severely damaged its infrastructure. This illegal blockade and aggression have resulted in the destruction of the infrastructure and productive capacity of Gaza and destroyed 25 per cent of its homes and nearly 75 per cent of its jobs, leading to widespread unemployment and dependence on international aid. The Israeli blockade is preventing our people in Gaza from rebuilding their homes, even though the international donor community has pledged some \$5 billion to finance reconstruction. The blockade against the Gaza Strip must be lifted immediately and completely, and the tragic suffering being inflicted on our people there must be ended as soon as possible.

We welcome the efforts of the international independent fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council concerning the Israeli attack on the Freedom Flotilla, which was carrying humanitarian assistance for our people in the Gaza Strip. We welcome the conclusions reached by the mission, and we also look forward to the submission by the Panel of Inquiry established by the Secretary-General of its findings to the Security Council.

To all of this I must add the fact that thousands of Palestinian prisoners and detainees remain in Israeli jails and detention centres. They are all fighting for

freedom. They must be released and an end must be put to their suffering. This is essential for creating a positive environment for the attainment of peace. We cannot reach a peace agreement that does not liberate all of them from their chains and their imprisonment.

In spite of all of this and despite the historic injustice that has been inflicted upon our people, their desire to achieve a just peace that guarantees the realization of their national rights in freedom and independence has not and will not diminish. Our wounded hands are still able to carry the olive branch picked from the splinters of the trees that the occupation forces uproot every day. Our people aspire to live in security, peace and stability on their Palestinian national soil, to build the lives and future of our generations.

We are willing and ready to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on rights and justice and on the resolutions of international legitimacy. Such a settlement must lead to the withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from all the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, so that the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as their capital, can enjoy independence and sovereignty and so that peace can prevail throughout the Middle East.

Because of our genuine desire to attain a comprehensive peace in the region, we have decided to enter into final status negotiations. We will exert every effort to reach an agreement for Palestinian-Israeli peace within one year, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, the Arab Peace Initiative, the road map and the vision of the two-State solution. On behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization, we have reaffirmed our commitment to the option of just peace and our determination, seriousness and sincere intention to make these negotiations succeed, in spite of all the difficulties and obstacles before us.

The international community should draw lessons from the reasons for the faltering of the political process and the inability to achieve its goals in the past. Restoring the credibility of the peace process mainly requires compelling the Government of Israel to comply with its obligations and commitments. In particular, the Government of Israel must cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, especially in and around East Jerusalem;

dismantle the apartheid annexation wall; and put an end to the policy of blockade and closures that restrict the lives and movement of our people and deprive them of their basic human rights.

Our demands for the freezing of settlement activities, the lifting of the blockade and an end to all other illegal Israeli practices do not constitute preconditions that are alien to the political process. Rather, they are consistent with the implementation of previous obligations and commitments which have been repeatedly reaffirmed in all the resolutions adopted since the start of the political process.

Israel's implementation of these obligations and commitments will lead to the creation of the necessary environment for the success of the negotiations and will give credibility to its pledge to implement the final agreement. Israel must choose between peace and the continuation of settlements.

From this rostrum, I reaffirm that we will continue, as we have always done, to make every possible effort so that these negotiations will achieve the desired objective of realizing peace by addressing all final status issues, namely Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders, water, security and the release of all prisoners and detainees. This must be done in a manner that will achieve freedom, independence and justice for the Palestinian people in their homeland, rectify the historical injustice inflicted upon them, achieve security and safety for all their neighbours, lead to a just peace throughout the Middle East, including on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, and thus usher in a new era of stability, progress, prosperity, coexistence and good-neighbourliness.

The political process will be put back on the right track only if the international community assumes the main responsibility for ending the Israeli occupation, the longest occupation in modern history; ensures our people's right to self-determination in their independent sovereign State based on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital; and finds a just and agreed solution to the plight of the Palestinian refugees. This must all be carried out through the implementation of the principles of the Charter, the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, and the provisions of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, on the ground in the occupied

Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. All of these measures constitute the legitimate political terms of reference for any successful negotiation leading to a final peace settlement.

Our people, despite the profound and continued suffering they have endured, hold steadfast to their rights, their land and their national soil. At the same time, they are determined to restore national unity and the bonds between the two parts of our homeland. We are making every effort to restore unity through dialogue and the good, honourable efforts of our brothers and friends, especially the Arab Republic of Egypt. On our part, we will spare no effort to end the division resulting from the coup against Palestinian legitimacy and to establish democracy as an essential foundation of our body politic.

We will also assume our responsibility for building national institutions for our independent State and national economy, and for ensuring the security and safety of our citizens under a national authority based on the rule of law, accountability, transparency and justice. We will also continue to fulfil our obligations under the road map and the agreements reached between the two sides.

In conclusion, it is imperative in this context to express our appreciation to all those who have contributed to sponsoring and supporting the peace process. Here, I would like to express my special thanks to His Excellency Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, who affirmed in his statement before the Assembly (see A/65/PV.11) two days ago the two-State solution and the need to freeze settlement activities and establish the independent State of Palestine with full membership in the United Nations next year. On this occasion, we reaffirm our readiness to cooperate fully with his country's efforts for a successful political process to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the region.

We must also pay tribute to the United Nations for preserving our cause and extending a helping hand to our people through its resolutions and decisions, which constitute an unshakeable foundation for peace. From this rostrum, we call on the United Nations to continue its pivotal role until justice is upheld, our people have regained their usurped rights and peace prevails in our entire region. We reiterate our appreciation for the Organization's tireless efforts to stand in solidarity with the just cause of Palestine, and

we reaffirm our faith in the peace to which we and all the peoples in the region aspire. We ask God to bless us with a future in which we will all enjoy peace, security and stability.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Mr. Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Ould Mohamed Laghdaf (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate, on behalf of Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, and on my own behalf, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session and to wish him every success in his new duties. I have great confidence that his diligent efforts will have a positive impact on our Organization, as did those of his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, whose praiseworthy labours strengthened the ties of cooperation, the bonds of brotherhood, and the universal principles of peace and dialogue within the General Assembly.

It also gives me great pleasure to express my thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his serious efforts to achieve

the objectives of the Organization and to strengthen the pillars of peace, security and prosperity in the world.

Mauritania fulfilled its constitutional obligation by selecting Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz as President of the Republic through elections in which the Mauritanian people expressed their will freely, impartially and maturely. Today, for the first time in its history, my country has taken a comprehensive qualitative leap forward into a new era — which we call “the era of serious work” — to improve the living conditions of Mauritanian citizens, consolidate democracy and build a State that is on good terms with its citizens and its neighbours on the basis of justice, equality and the values of the Republic.

In this new era, there are no political prisoners in Mauritania and the pluralistic Parliament plays its full role in legislating and in supervising the Government. The press exercises its freedom without censorship or constraint, as do political parties, unions and civil society institutions.

Inspired by the electoral platform of President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, the Government of Mauritania has devoted itself to implementing an ambitious development policy with clearly visible goals, including the elimination of corruption and its consequences; the promotion and use of the country's resources in a rational, responsible and transparent manner; ensuring respect for the rule of law and the country's prestige; providing security throughout society; offering basic services, and constructing essential infrastructure needed for the country's development.

This policy has earned the confidence and support of Mauritania's brothers, friends and development partners, who, at their round table meeting in Brussels in June, blessed our ambitious development programme and pledged financial support totalling \$3.2 billion over three years. In this regard, we thank them sincerely for having made every effort to ensure the success of the round table and for all their support for our development programmes.

In the course of implementing these programmes, Mauritania became a hub of activity as roads and health and education facilities were built and integrated projects established for the purpose of empowering women and youth in order to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country and to improve conditions for the poor and the marginalized, who

rejoiced at the election of our President and have granted him the nickname “President of the poor” for his great devotion to and care for the people.

Mauritania, like other countries, is confronted with terrorism and transnational organized crime. Terrorism is a global phenomenon that is not tied to a particular country, continent, religion or society. Any attempt to conflate Islam with this phenomenon is rejected, unacceptable and illogical. Those most affected by terrorism are, after all, the Muslims and the Islamic world.

We believe that the fight against terrorism requires progress in social justice, the training of young people and their integration into an active life. This will give them hope so that they do not become easy recruiting targets for terrorists and extremist organizations.

My country is making diligent efforts on all these fronts and promoting the role of our prominent scholars to debate in the best possible manner and to provide the correct image of Islam, which is a religion of tolerance, virtue and acceptance of others and one that rejects excess and extremism. Moreover, Mauritania, far from being at war with anyone, as His Excellency the President of the Republic has repeatedly said, will spare no effort to maintain peace and security for its citizens and ensure the necessary conditions for the development of the country in security and stability.

The establishment of a united Arab Maghreb is a strategic option for the peoples of the region, and failure to maintain such unity will reflect negatively on the future of that vital region of the world. There is no doubt that finding a timely solution to the issue of Western Sahara and obtaining the consent of the parties concerned would contribute to accelerating the pace of integration of the united Maghreb and enable it to play its full role as an indispensable and effective regional partner.

On the other hand, conscious of the importance of the United Nations as an irreplaceable forum for the voices of Member States and other members of the international community, big and small, powerful and weak, as well as for resolving difficult international issues and coordinating and supporting development efforts, Mauritania supports efforts to reform the Organization and its organs, especially the Security Council.

We call for the expansion of the Council to include permanent representation for the African continent and the Arab Group, because democracy is an international requirement and not only a national practice or objective. Given their cultural, human and strategic significance, it is neither logical nor acceptable not to grant permanent seats on the Security Council to the African continent and the Arab world.

The Arab-Israeli conflict remains a source of tension and a threat to international peace and security in an extremely sensitive and vital area of the world. That region will know no stability until a definitive solution to the conflict is found. Such a solution must be just and permanent and in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy. It must allow the brotherly Palestinian people to exercise their full right to establish their independent and viable State in Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. It must also ensure the restoration of all occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan Heights and the Lebanese Shab'a farms.

Mauritania hopes that the direct negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis, sponsored by the United States, will conclude in tangible results and an acceptable time frame. There is no people in the Middle East that needs peace more than the Palestinian people. My country has called for the lifting of the unjust siege on Gaza and for an end to its collective and inhumane punishment. Restoring rights and justice to their owners and between nations and cultures is the best means to achieve peace and security in the world.

Before concluding, allow me to reiterate what I stated a few days ago — the development challenges before us all will be exacerbated unless we all assume our responsibilities and fulfil our commitments. Developing countries require the urgent attention of the international community if they are to achieve the stability, development and progress that will enable them to integrate into the global economic system.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Guido Westerwelle, Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. Westerwelle (Germany) (*spoke in German; interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is an honour for me to speak to the General Assembly today.

The world has changed dramatically since the United Nations was founded 65 years ago. International trade and exchange are, of course, nothing new. What is new, however, is how quickly the changes affect everybody's lives. Only if we in the United Nations are and remain able to act can we shape these global changes. We will manage to solve problems relating to security and economic, social and ecological development only if the international community stands united. Germany is ready to assume global responsibility within the framework of the United Nations.

Germany's foreign policy is firmly embedded in the international community. In Europe, a system of cooperation has replaced the confrontation that cruelly divided our continent for centuries. The European Union is successful because, in Europe, all peoples and States meet on an equal footing. The United Nations, too, brings together nations large and small, rich and poor, those that are more powerful and those with less influence. Cooperation between equals on an equal footing is our guiding principle also for work here at the United Nations. Each and every country must respect all others.

German foreign policy is a policy of peace. This autumn, Germany will stand for election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council because the Council is the ideal forum in which to cooperate in the cause of peace and development. Peace is more than the absence of war. In today's globalized world, people are just as vulnerable to the consequences of climate change, poverty and underdevelopment as they are to violence and oppression.

Climate change has a direct impact on each and every one of us. Countless people are already personally feeling its economic and social consequences. In their letter to the Security Council, the Pacific island States rightly warned us in no uncertain terms just how much climate change threatens everyone's security. Everyone must play their

part to protect the climate. In Germany, we have just adopted a forward-looking energy strategy. By the year 2050, 80 per cent of our electricity production will come from renewable sources. Germany has also pledged to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 40 per cent by the year 2020, compared to the 1990 baseline. Even now, we have reduced our carbon dioxide emissions by almost 30 per cent. We are pioneers in the field of climate protection. We are helping those who are now most adversely affected by climate change. We are particularly concerned about the fate of small island States.

Anyone who is serious about combating climate change has to build on innovation, new technologies and exchange. Developed and developing nations alike can profit from cooperation on future energies. Germany will contribute its technological expertise, for example, in the fields of renewable energy and energy efficiency. In this way, we are turning the challenge of climate change into an opportunity for fair development and enhanced cooperation. Climate policy is a cornerstone of any sustainable development policy. The recent summit on the Millennium Development Goals laid down the next steps forward in our global partnership for development.

Education is the key to development. Development needs education. Education protects people from discrimination and oppression. Education fights prejudice and thereby fosters peace. Education also creates products and markets; education is the path to prosperity. The true wealth of many nations is no longer found in their raw materials but in the minds of their people. Education is a human right. It is because education will determine whether societies succeed or fail in tomorrow's world that Germany is one of the major international partners for learning. By building on education, we are building bridges to the future for the young people of today.

The United Nations itself must also keep up with the pace of change. Today's world order is not properly reflected if Africa and Latin America are not permanently represented on the Security Council. Asia, too, rightly considers itself to be underrepresented. The entire continent, not just individual States, is developing at breathtaking speed. We take our partnerships seriously, both the old and the new. Germany, too, remains ready to assume greater responsibility.

Disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are not issues of the past but challenges of our time. Disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin. We have to do all we possibly can to ensure that weapons of mass destruction do not become the bane of globalization. Unlike the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons five years ago, this May's Review Conference was a success. If we work together to maintain this momentum, it will be in our power to ensure that this decade does not see a build-up of arms but becomes a decade of disarmament. A world without nuclear weapons is a long-term vision, but even a marathon begins with the first step.

There is now movement in the disarmament debate. The group of States founded here in New York on Wednesday to advance disarmament and arms control does not stand alone. For over 10 years, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva was not even able to agree on an agenda. That is not the way to live up to our shared responsibility. We met yesterday at the invitation of the Secretary-General to break the deadlock binding the Geneva Conference. Our world will be a more secure place when the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enters into force and the production of fissile material is ended once and for all.

German peace policy stands for the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts. Germany is doing its utmost to ensure that the direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians are a success. We will continue to strengthen the forces of reason and reconciliation. During this vital period for the peace process in particular, I urge both sides to refrain from taking any action that might block the path to peace. We condemn any form of violence that has the sole aim of torpedoing the peace talks. At the same time, we call for the moratorium on settlement construction to be extended. Lasting peace will be achieved only through a two-State solution, with Israel and a Palestinian State living peacefully side by side within secure borders.

Iran, like every other country, naturally has the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, the Tehran leadership itself has sown doubt about the civilian nature of its nuclear programme. Iran, by demonstrating openness and transparency, can allay that doubt. Our offer of dialogue still stands. It is now up to Iran to grasp our outstretched hand.

The conference aimed at establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, planned for 2012, will be a major opportunity to strengthen peace and security in the region. Germany is encouraging all countries in the region to take part to ensure that the conference is a success. We are committed to a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East.

Germany is one of the major supporters of a peaceful and secure Afghanistan. As we agreed in London and Kabul, we want to transfer security responsibility for the whole of Afghanistan to the Afghan Government by 2014. To make progress in that country, so long ravaged by war and civil strife, effective measures must be taken to prevent the violence. However, military means alone will not bring success. We favour a comprehensive approach and above all a political solution. All sides now need the courage and the stamina to engage in reconciliation.

The German Government assists when people anywhere in the world are struck by natural disasters and emergencies. However, a country's conscience is to be found in the hearts of its citizens. I am proud that my fellow Germans donate so generously at times of greatest need. Humanity and solidarity are global values; humanity and solidarity make no distinction based on skin colour or religious beliefs. When the tsunami devastated coastlines around the Indian Ocean, when the Haiti earthquake destroyed the work of decades, or just recently, when the horrific floods in Pakistan left havoc in their wake, we Germans shared the victims' pain and helped in the most heartfelt way possible. We will stand by Pakistan over the coming months and years to ensure that the country has a promising economic future.

We are working towards a peaceful order in the Sudan, now and after the referendum early next year. We are looking for ways of achieving stable conditions in Yemen and are particularly active in the Friends of Yemen group. We are working hard to combat piracy off the Horn of Africa and to bring peace and stability to Somalia.

Reconstruction efforts in devastated regions cannot bring success overnight. Similarly, for societies torn by war and civil strife, the route to life in dignity leads through peace and reconciliation. There can be true peace only when human rights are respected. For us, such principles as the rule of law, freedom of opinion, freedom of the press and respect for

inalienable human rights are essential. The protection of human rights remains a task for all societies.

It is a fundamental tenet of the United Nations that women determine their own lives and help decide the fate of their countries. Ethnic or religious minorities enrich their societies. Tolerance is one of Germany's guiding principles. Everyone wins in the competition for the best ideas; in a clash of cultures, there can only be losers.

United Europe can make a valuable contribution on our continent and beyond. Germany is working to ensure that, in the future, the European Union shall cooperate even more closely with other regions in Latin America, Africa and Asia, and live up to its global responsibility. Germany is the third-largest development cooperation donor. We have practically recovered from the financial and economic crisis and are on the right track due to our robust economic growth. This strong economy makes Germany a strong global partner.

If all countries, small and large, work together, we will be able to master the pressing challenges of our world.

(spoke in English)

They can count on Germany. They can rely on Germany.

The Acting President *(spoke in Arabic)*: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) *(spoke in Arabic)*: The beginning of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly coincides with the preparations of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), chaired by my country, to celebrate 50 years of achievements. During those years, the Movement has greatly helped to reinforce international and multilateral action under changing regional and international circumstances. The Movement's work over those years has demonstrated the ability of developing countries to contribute effectively to the maintenance of international peace and security, make progress in development, and promote human rights, basic freedoms and the furtherance of good governance at the international level.

This week's NAM ministerial meeting represents the point of departure for a major celebration, to be hosted by Indonesia in April or May 2011. The meeting will chart a clear and integrated future course, drawing on past achievements as an impetus for future endeavours. It will define the elements of the Movement's future commitment to greater openness towards and interaction with the international community, in the context of fairness and mutual interest, to ensure that the aspirations and hopes of our countries and peoples are met.

Egypt appreciates the main theme that the President proposed for discussion at this session. Global governance touches on many political, economic and social issues. Egypt believes that the elected organs of the United Nations should handle the principal tasks in that area. We must all ensure that the United Nations discharges such roles effectively and wisely.

In the political field, for example, it is no longer acceptable for permanent membership of the Security Council, the main organ entrusted with maintaining international peace and security, to continue to operate under obsolete rules of an era long past. Similarly, it is unacceptable for the work of the Council or its mechanisms to continue to be characterized by a lack of transparency or balance.

A serious approach to current historic challenges requires more balanced, conscious and responsible management of this core issue. The Security Council has made numerous grave mistakes, resulting in the loss of innocent lives. Many resolutions that have been blocked by the Council would have corrected the disparities, returned rights to victims and restored the confidence of world public opinion in the Council's performance and impartiality.

Turning to the economic sphere, we note that the United Nations, and even the key Bretton Woods international financial institutions, no longer lead in managing the top international economic issues. Other international bodies are now beginning to assume that role.

At its summit last year, the Group of 20 declared itself the forum to coordinate global economic policy. Such a development prompts us to be cautious of its repercussions, since that forum or any other assuming such a responsibility should have the geographical representation necessary to ensure the fair airing of all

trends and approaches prevailing in the international community. It must also ensure fair participation in formulating policy and in providing a balanced approach to current challenges. Marginalization is no longer acceptable. Countries of the South have rights and must have a voice and participate in any forum that deals with the international situation.

Egypt will continue its tireless work to achieve the wider and more balanced participation of the developing world in international economic decision-making. Our world has experienced successive years of poor economic performance and stubborn crises. That has aggravated the current inequities and heightened the challenges faced by all countries, developing countries in particular. It requires us all to support coordinated and joint action to address the shortcomings and inequities and to achieve sustainable and balanced global growth.

In that context, we welcome the outcome of the recent High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, at which the delegation of Egypt expressed its view on the Goals and the extent to which we will be able to achieve them. We hope that the conclusions of the summit will provide us with the necessary momentum to speed up the achievement of the Goals ahead of the final review in 2015.

The fact that Egypt is part of the Islamic world is common knowledge. We feel the pain of Muslims wherever they are. We share their joys and celebrations; we grieve with them and we feel their pain. There is no doubt that regrettable and appalling incidents against Muslims and Islam are increasingly frequent, and systematic in certain cases. They have ranged from attacks on the symbols and sanctities of the faith to the harassment of Muslims. In general, we find the West being drawn into a clash with the Muslim world. Such a clash would serve no one except extremists and those who hold perverse ideas on both sides. It would not be in the interest of security and stability in the world. It would not be in the interests of moderates. In such a clash, the winner is a loser and the victor is defeated.

Need I remind this gathering of the need for coordinated action among the influential advocates of religious, civilizational and cultural moderation in order to eliminate the threat before it becomes more ominous and destroys much of everything? We can no

longer accept pretexts to condone practices against Islam and its followers — such as the right to freedom of expression — which are surprisingly naïve, excessive in essence and offensive in nature.

Egypt will continue to do its utmost at the political, cultural and religious levels to address such threats. We call on all countries, in particular Governments, to play their part in highlighting the potential horror of a terrible clash of faiths and civilizations. We call on them to spread a culture of enlightenment based on tolerance, respect for differences and the renunciation of fanaticism, hatred and zealotry. Laws must be enacted to protect minorities and their beliefs from the aggression of extremists and promoters of strife.

With regard to matters of international peace and security, disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are priorities on Egypt's agenda. Only a few months ago, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons successfully concluded its work. It adopted an important document on the Middle East that included an action plan and measures to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. Egypt will closely follow all steps taken to implement that plan, including the serious preparations for the 2012 conference.

Once again, let me reiterate Egypt's position that adopting double standards on the question of non-proliferation will result in a continued threat to world stability. In the Middle East particularly, we note increasing efforts to add to the commitments of non-nuclear-weapon States that are signatories to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, while the need for the Treaty to become universal in our region and for all nuclear installations in the Middle East to be subjected to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency is disregarded. This uncomfortable situation is a source of concern to us. We will work with all like-minded parties to address and redress this situation in relevant international forums.

Year after year, we return to the United Nations to debate the question of Palestine and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict. Every year, our words swing between the hope for a complete but unrealized breakthrough, and the fear of a deterioration and an explosion that would compound the pain and suffering of the Palestinian people and aggravate the dangers of

overreaching extremism, militancy and violence faced by our region.

This year is no different. It is true that there is hope in the wake of the start of direct negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides; however, chances for success remain slim. Despite the agony of the road to negotiations, Egypt believes that their relaunch may represent an important opportunity that should not be squandered.

It is important for the Israeli side to realize that negotiations are not an end in themselves. They are neither a game nor a waste of time. A serious approach must be the basis and distinguishing mark of the negotiating process. Without the required seriousness and credibility, the process will soon lose the little support it enjoys from the public on both sides. Egypt believes that these negotiations should seek to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the implementation of the two-State solution through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital and its borders based on the lines of 1967, as has been confirmed by the United States, the sponsor of the negotiations, and the international Quartet on all occasions and mentioned by President Obama a few days ago.

During the first round of negotiations in Washington, D.C., and later in Sharm el-Sheikh, we heard Israel's assurances of its commitment to the required seriousness. Therefore, we call on the Israeli side to take the difficult and necessary decisions, as President Mubarak said two days ago, to achieve a just political settlement that would allow the peoples and countries of the region to transcend decades of conflict, victimization and wasted resources.

There is no doubt that a freeze in Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territories has become a major factor in determining the intentions of the Israeli side and its level of commitment to the success of the negotiations. Should Israel fail in its commitment to prolong the moratorium on its settlement activities, it would expose the negotiation process to collapse and bear full responsibility before regional and world public opinion, as well as the sponsor, for wasting a valuable opportunity afforded by a major United States effort. Israel would also bear responsibility for any negative consequences. Were Israel to pass this test, we would look forward to a quick resolution by both parties of

the question of borders between them. The solutions in this respect are known to all. Settling the matter of borders would enable us to take important steps towards settling the conflict as a whole.

Egypt also supports any serious effort to resume direct negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in a way that would allow both countries to regain their occupied territories and consequently reach a comprehensive peace, implement the Arab Peace Initiative and end the Arab-Israeli conflict once and for all.

Brotherly Sudan is currently facing the most difficult juncture since its independence. In addition to developments in Darfur, the referendum on self-determination for Southern Sudan is drawing near. Egypt follows this situation with the greatest interest, given our common border with that country. Our interest is based not only on the close brotherly relations between our two peoples, but also on our anticipation of any possible consequences of the referendum. Egypt will pursue its efforts to preserve the unity of the Sudan as long as that is the choice of the majority in that country. But if the wish of the Southern Sudanese, who are also our brothers, were any different, Egypt would respect the outcome and work with all parties in the interests of development and stability.

The security of the Arab Gulf is one of Egypt's major concerns and foreign policy priorities. Apart from our age-old relations, Egypt understands that it is of strategic importance for its Arab brethren in the Gulf. Egypt will therefore continue to work with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries for the maintenance of Arab national security in the region and to ensure that any security arrangements reached are in consonance with the requirements and concerns of Arab countries.

Egypt affirms the urgent need to reach a political settlement on the Iranian nuclear issue, especially since its dangerous escalation would threaten an eruption of the situation that could endanger peace and stability in that vital region of the world. While it is true that threats against a State member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference are not acceptable, we nevertheless ask Iran to refrain from any measure that could exacerbate the situation in the region, and specifically in the Gulf area, and lead to a confrontation with different forces in the international

community. All parties must adhere to negotiations as a way to a peaceful, political settlement of this issue. Such a settlement would guarantee Iran's legitimate right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and enable the international community to verify that Iran is in compliance with its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. No evidence has yet been seen to suggest otherwise.

The southern strait of the Red Sea is an area of strategic importance for Egypt. It leads to the Suez Canal, a vital waterway at the centre of the world. Securing this critically important area is at the heart of Egyptian interests. On that basis, Egypt has participated extensively in all international efforts to combat piracy off the Somali coast and in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Egypt has also provided support to some countries of the region in areas such as the development of coast guard capacity, raising awareness about the prevention of piracy, and the implementation of a media and communications strategy to combat piracy. In the same vein, continued fratricidal fighting in Somalia has consequences for stability in the Horn of Africa and, as such, remains a source of concern to us.

Egypt is pursuing its efforts, including in outreach, to further raise international interest in Somalia with a view to achieving a ceasefire and proceeding to a comprehensive and peaceful political settlement. Such a settlement will be conditional on the existence of the political will of the Somali parties to achieve peace and on the commitment of external parties to refrain from interfering in Somali affairs while seriously participating in efforts to achieve a political settlement.

In conclusion, Egypt is a country of many civilizations, features and characteristic, from its Arab nationalist to its deep-rooted Islamic and Coptic identities, and from the genuine African to the historical Mediterranean. All have intermingled over the years and left their mark on Egypt's foreign policy. All these influences define our overlapping interests and guide our thinking and action in addressing problems and crises.

Egypt will continue to work for the achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East and the world. It will do its utmost for the well-being of its people, nation and region. We will continue the struggle for balanced and sustainable development. We will also

pursue our serious work for the benefit of the countries of the South.

Our delegation looks forward to working with Members in a spirit of openness to ensure the successful outcome of this session. We extend our hand to all countries, with an open mind and a sincere desire to achieve the international agenda before us.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Kevin Rudd, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia.

Mr. Rudd (Australia): This great body has been in existence for two thirds of a century — three times longer than its predecessor body, the League of Nations, and longer than previous attempts to fashion a continuing collective approach to the common problems of nation States. The question we must ask ourselves today is whether the United Nations remains effective in confronting the challenges of our time.

The United Nations was established in the grim aftermath of the two deadliest conflicts in human history, in which close to 80 million people were killed and entire families and almost entire generations lost for all time. The world came together out of necessity. There had to be a better way, and in the decades since we first met at San Francisco, we have managed to avoid another world war, although at times that seemed less than certain.

Today, we are faced with a different set of challenges and in different strategic, political and economic circumstances. We now live in a world that is more multipolar and more interconnected than ever before. We are confronted with the double-edged sword of globalization. The transformation of the global economy has increased living standards and lifted many hundreds of millions out of poverty.

At the same time, the increased interdependence of global financial markets ensured that no country connected to the world economy was spared the impact of the global financial crisis. Furthermore, the rapid transformation of global communications and the radical increase in global people movements have improved the well-being of all humankind. But equally, they have created or at least amplified a new set of security threats to all humankind: pandemic diseases, transnational organized crime and the continuing threat of global terrorism. There is also the global challenge of climate change. The unconstrained carbon emissions

of one State impact on the long-term survival of all States. Climate change respects no national or geographic boundaries and thus simultaneously demands both national and integrated global responses.

So two thirds of a century after our formation, we the United Nations now face increasingly complex global challenges in an increasingly fragmented world and a much more contested international space. These new global realities create an imperative for responsive, representative and, most critically, effective systems of global governance.

If we fail to make the United Nations work and to make its institutions relevant to the great challenges we all now face, the uncomfortable fact is that the United Nations will become a hollow shell. Nation States may retain its form, but will increasingly seek to go around it and deploy other mechanisms to achieve real results.

And that is the question we all face today. It is a question of our collective political will to make the existing institutions work and combine the existing and unique legitimacy of the United Nations system with a new-found effectiveness on security, development and climate change.

The United Nations has most of the essential structures in place, but if the structures are to work we must harness the political will necessary to make them work. In other words, we must enable the institutions we have created to do the job for which they were created. Put even more starkly, we must do that which we say. If we have a Conference on Disarmament, it should do disarmament — not pretend. If we have a convention on climate change, it must do the job to tackle climate change — not just talk about it, and similarly with development. Otherwise, the credibility of the United Nations in the eyes of the world and our own citizens will eventually collapse. The international community can no longer tolerate the actions of a few dissenting States to roadblock the common resolve of the many.

The international community faces the continuing challenge of international terrorism. Terrorism knows no geographic or political boundaries. We are now in the tenth year since terrorists launched their murderous attack on this great city of New York. The threat of international terrorism remains alive. It continues to challenge civilized norms, to generate fear and insecurity, and to take innocent civilian lives in many parts of the world.

The outlawing of terrorist organizations under the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions, together with the individual and cooperative measures taken by Member States, reflect the unprecedented levels of international collaboration in responding to the worldwide threat of terrorism.

As part of the effort to combat terrorism, many Member States have their armed forces and other personnel committed to Afghanistan, again sanctioned by Security Council resolutions. These brave soldiers, police officers and aid workers, representing so many of the countries represented here in the General Assembly, including Australia, remain in Afghanistan following many years of conflict.

The result is that Afghanistan no longer represents an unimpeded base for the global operations of terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaida. The result is also that we are all contributing to the security and stability of Afghanistan as a nation. This has been a difficult war, but our collective resolve is strong enough to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a base for the export of terrorism.

Beyond Afghanistan, terrorism continues to remain a threat to people of all faiths and civilizations. We must remain nationally and internationally vigilant against the possibility of further terrorist attacks. The threat remains real.

We must equally be concerned about the continued challenge of nuclear proliferation. Violations of the non-proliferation regime by States such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran represent a potent and potential threat to us all. It is for this reason that Australia provides robust support to the United Nations sanctions regime against both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran.

The United Nations has played a critical role in promoting the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are mutually reinforcing processes and cannot be separated.

Australia's activism on arms control and disarmament remains undiminished. And there remains much urgent work to be done. In 1996, Australia sponsored the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in this Assembly to ensure its adoption. Since then, 182 States have signed the Treaty and 153 have ratified it. Nine more States are needed to ratify in order for the

Treaty to enter into force. Australia welcomes recent statements by Indonesia and the United States concerning their intention to ratify the Treaty, and we would urge all States that to date have failed to indicate their intention to ratify the Treaty to do so in order to enable it to enter into force.

The most recent Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference was held earlier this year. Australia and Japan worked closely together in the lead-up to the Conference, including through the jointly sponsored report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND), prepared by the former Foreign Minister of Australia, Gareth Evans, and his Japanese counterpart, Yoriko Kawaguchi. This significant report provided substantial momentum in the lead-up to the Review Conference. We believe that the Evans-Kawaguchi report of the ICNND also represents the most comprehensive, practical and contemporary blueprint for the international community to both consider and adopt a comprehensive arms control and non-proliferation agenda.

The Review Conference agreed by consensus on 64 sets of actions. And Australia and Japan took the initiative this week in New York to jointly host a cross-regional meeting of Foreign Ministers, with the aim of working towards the implementation of those 64 actions. The potential catastrophe of nuclear conflict means that the status quo is not an option. We must move ahead with the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, and we must ensure that the United Nations disarmament machinery is doing its job.

On the wider question of security, the Australian Government, under Prime Minister Gillard, warmly welcomes the statement to this Assembly by the President of the United States concerning his efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace in the Middle East (see A/65/PV.11). Australia's position remains constant: such a settlement must allow both Israel and a future Palestinian State to live side by side in peace and security. Australia calls on all parties to put their shoulders to the wheel, to seize the historic opportunity that now presents itself to bring about a lasting peace. All States members of the General Assembly should welcome the prospect of both an Israeli and a Palestinian State being represented at the sixty-sixth session of the Assembly, to be held next year.

Over the past several years, Australia has promoted the concept of an Asia-Pacific community involving the active membership in the future architecture of our region of both the United States and the Russian Federation. Australia therefore welcomes the imminent membership of the United States and Russia in the East Asia Summit. The East Asia Summit leaders will take this historic decision in Hanoi in October. Australia, as a founding member of the East Asia Summit, looks forward to contributing to the evolution of this wider sense of community across this, the most dynamic region of the world.

On questions of wider human security, Australia remains fully engaged on international and regional challenges, including irregular movements of people, organized crime and people-smuggling.

The most immediate and pressing threat to the physical security of Australia's wider region lies in the scourge of natural disasters. The Asia-Pacific region has seen tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanoes and floods on a massive scale. Australia proposes that the international community consider afresh our capacity to respond rapidly, coherently and proportionately to large-scale natural disasters.

Within our own region, Australia argues that this would also represent an effective benefit to the peoples and countries of our region, which are particularly prone to natural disasters. It would also in time constitute a valuable confidence- and security-building measure among the armed forces, emergency services and security agencies of the various nation-States of the Asia Pacific. The magnitude of what I witnessed last week when I was in Pakistan underlines the importance of better planning, preparation and coordination to deal with natural disasters on a mass scale. We cannot afford simply to wait for another such disaster to occur before realizing that the resources of the United Nations and its agencies are simply incapable of meeting challenges of such an order of magnitude.

The challenges to global economic stability remain significant. The full impact of the global financial crisis is not yet clear. There are still systemic problems within the global financial system. These must be dealt with through the appropriate national and international institutions if we are to remove the underlying causes of the crisis that began in the United

States in September 2008 and then proceeded to ravage the economies and the working people of the world.

Beyond the specific reforms necessary in the global financial system, the parallel problem of global financial imbalances must also be addressed. These have formed part of the Group of 20 (G-20) agenda, in which Australia is active. The objectives of the Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth agreed to by the G-20 States at their Pittsburgh summit in September 2009 remain essential and must be implemented if we are to act on the causes of the recent crisis.

Last December, the nations of the world assembled in Copenhagen for the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Australia was an active participant at Copenhagen. Together with a number of other States, Australia worked tirelessly to produce the Copenhagen Accord. The Accord did not represent all that the international community needed then in order to bring about a comprehensive response to the continuing challenge of climate change. It did, however, represented four significant advances.

For the first time, the Accord entrenched 2°C or less as the limit beyond which global temperatures could not be allowed to rise in order to avoid irretrievable climate change for the planet.

For the first time, both developed and developing countries accepted that they had responsibilities to bring about this outcome.

For the first time, developed and developing countries agreed to develop a framework for the measurement, reporting and verification of mitigation actions.

And for the first time, developed countries committed themselves to mobilizing an amount approaching \$30 billion in international public financing for immediate action in developing countries to 2012, and to work towards a goal of mobilizing \$100 billion annually by 2020 in funding from all sources.

Much, however, remains to be done. Australia believes the international community must urgently address the particular climate-change adaptation needs of the world's most vulnerable States, in particular the island countries of the Pacific, the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean.

One significant area of progress in the period ahead lies in the proper protection, preservation and reforestation of the world's rainforests. Collectively, rainforest degradation and deforestation in developing countries represents about one fifth of global greenhouse gas emissions. Australia stands ready to act with other States, including Norway, to build on the work already done, in order to achieve an effective outcome in this area as rapidly as possible. The international community needs to see an early sign of real success in our international efforts to combat climate change. We believe that action on rainforests, through what is called the REDD-plus set of initiatives — on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries — represents one such area of possible early advance.

Australia is now active on both the Secretary-General's High-level Panels, on global sustainability and on climate change finance. This, added to our continued participation in the UNFCCC, means that Australia will continue to be among the most globally active States in global forums for bringing about a comprehensive and effective global response to climate change. In doing so, the Governments of the world will have to closely consider new growth models that incorporate both the concept and the reality of lower-carbon economies.

For the economies of the world, this transformation — which some have called the next industrial revolution — also represents an unprecedented opportunity for investment and employment as the global economy embraces new efficiency measures and new renewable energy strategies. The international community needs to embrace a new way of looking at climate change, which sees action on climate change providing new industries, new investment and new job opportunities for the future.

All Governments represented in the Assembly participated in the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Australia fully embraces the MDG framework.

This week, in New York, we said that our aid programme has doubled over the last five years and is projected to double again by 2015. Over time, more of our aid will go to the least developed countries, and we will continue to give high priority to assisting the

world's small island States, particularly our Pacific neighbours, in recognition of their special needs.

We expect to invest some \$5 billion in education by 2015, including support for universal primary education. Australia also expects to invest at least \$1.6 billion in women's and children's health up to 2015.

Australia applauds the initiative to create a new institution entitled UN Women, under the capable leadership of the new Under-Secretary-General, Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile. Australia looks forward to working with UN Women on the vast array of challenges which half of humanity faces and for which our existing international frameworks have been found wanting. The education of women and girls and the security of women and girls from violence and sexual abuse and exploitation must now become a core part of our global campaign for a fairer world.

Human rights abuses and humanitarian crises in failing States continue to plague us. We must enhance the negotiations on the responsibility to protect and support the mandate of the International Criminal Court. We must also continue to speak out against flagrant abuses.

Often it is the indigenous peoples of the world who suffer most. I am proud of Australia's apology to our own indigenous peoples and our policy of closing the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. I am also proud of Australia's support for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Australia is making a major effort in the treatment of our indigenous peoples, although we still have a long way to go.

Australia is a founding Member of the United Nations. We have been active in this institution for the last 65 years.

We are also a candidate for the Security Council for the 2013-2014 term. Australia has contributed 65,000 of our number to 52 different peacekeeping missions across the world. We remain active in several such peace operations today, including in Cyprus, Sudan, Timor-Leste and Afghanistan.

Over the years, Australia has led a number of significant United Nations initiatives, including the Cambodia peace settlement and the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as leading the force that

stabilized Timor-Leste after its people voted for independence.

Australia remains intimately engaged in all the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations. We are also active in other international institutions, including the Commonwealth.

Australia is the twelfth largest source of funding for the United Nations budget. Australia pays in full and on time. We always seek to do that which we say we will do.

Australia wants to be part of the solution to the many challenges that the international community now faces, not just point to the problems. Australia believes in the power of creative ideas and active diplomacy to solve long-standing international problems. Australia values good international citizenship. It is for these reasons that Australia has been committed to the United Nations since the very beginning.

The United Nations is inevitably imperfect. As the Organization's second Secretary-General — the great Swede, Dag Hammarskjöld — famously said, "The United Nations was not created in order to bring us to heaven, but in order to save us from hell".

Our responsibility today is to fulfil the vision that our forebears had for this great institution 65 years ago. Our responsibility is to make the United Nations fulfil its mission — to make the United Nations work through the combined political will of all Member States.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Kanat Saudabayev, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Saudabayev (Kazakhstan) (spoke in Russian): First of all, I would like to offer congratulations on the upcoming sixty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. For an individual person, 65 is an age when life experience turns into wisdom. As the great Goethe once said, it is our experience that teaches us to truly appreciate life. Today, the United Nations, with its 65 years of experience gained in the noble work for peace and progress, is the most reputable and relevant international organization there is. Each State Member of the United Nations, regardless of its size or power, seeks to contribute to building a safer and better world.

On 29 August 1949, the first atomic explosion on the ancient Kazakh land was carried out near the city of Semipalatinsk, unleashing an insane nuclear arms race and inflicting enormous suffering on the people of Kazakhstan. On 29 August 1991, the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, issued a decree that unilaterally shut down, once and for all, one of the world's largest nuclear test sites.

It is highly symbolic that 18 years later, the General Assembly at its preceding session acted upon his initiative to adopt a resolution establishing 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests (resolution 64/35). The unanimous adoption of the resolution has effectively reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to the process of reducing the nuclear threat.

The April visit of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to Kazakhstan started with a tour of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. Standing right on the former Ground Zero, he urged the international community to redouble its efforts to create a world free of nuclear weapons.

For the people of Kazakhstan, who know only too well all the horrors of nuclear tests, the issue of a total ban on such tests is particularly relevant. Over the course of 40 years, some 490 nuclear explosions were carried out at the Semipalatinsk test site, affecting more than half a million people and damaging territory as large as today's Germany.

Today we call upon States that have not signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to do so as soon as possible. The entry into force of the CTBT will become one of the key areas of effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), an important instrument forming a foundation for the security of all humanity.

We are satisfied that the States parties to the NPT were able to adopt a final document last May at the conclusion of the latest NPT Review Conference. But new and more decisive steps are needed today for nuclear disarmament. An early drafting of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, which along with the CTBT should become an important pillar of the NPT, is one such step.

We believe that it is extremely important to begin, as soon as possible, to draft an international legally binding instrument providing security assurances by nuclear Powers to non-nuclear-weapon States. Only such assurances can effectively keep in check the aspirations of certain non-nuclear States to acquire nuclear weapons, which they regard as a guarantee of their own security.

The establishment of new zones free from nuclear weapons, including in the Middle East, would represent another step towards achieving the goal of a nuclear-free world. We are convinced that a focused and progressive move in that direction would contribute to the establishment of trust among neighbours in the region and lay the foundations for a radical change in the situation of that long-suffering region.

Addressing the Assembly from this rostrum, I would like to reaffirm the urgency and relevance of the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, to draft a universal declaration on a nuclear-free world, which would reflect the commitment of all States to firmly and consistently move towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

We support the legitimate and inalienable right of each State party to the NPT to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, such activities should be carried out in a transparent manner and on the basis of strict compliance with all requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and under its control. Kazakhstan, the world's largest uranium producer, intends to contribute to the development of nuclear energy and is ready to host an international nuclear fuel bank, under the auspices of the IAEA, and to commit itself to its safe storage.

As 2010 Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Kazakhstan, in the interests of all participating States, has emphasized efforts to shape not a security space but a security community, free of dividing lines and zones with different levels of security.

The promotion of an atmosphere of trust in the interests of all and strengthening consensus on key issues in all three dimensions of OSCE activities has made it possible to reach a historic consensus on an OSCE summit, to be held on 1 and 2 December 2010 in the capital of Kazakhstan. It will be the first such event in the past 11 years. I have no doubt that this upcoming

Astana summit will become a landmark in the progressive movement of the OSCE participating States towards shaping a truly common and indivisible security community in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian zones, based on shared values, principles and commitments.

In that regard, we view the discussion at this OSCE summit of the issue of the stabilization and social and economic rehabilitation of Afghanistan as an important contribution to regional and global security. Time has proven that a purely military solution to the Afghan problem does not exist. Accordingly, Kazakhstan favours enhanced efforts by the international community to adapt Afghanistan to post-war development. On the initiative of our head of State, an educational programme has begun this year to train some 1,000 Afghan nationals in the educational institutions of Kazakhstan for careers in medicine, agriculture and construction. We have allocated \$50 million to that purpose.

The serious political crisis in Kyrgyzstan, which could have extremely negative consequences not only for Central Asia but also far beyond its borders, has demonstrated the lack of an effective and comprehensive mechanism to prevent such conflicts. That is why the forthcoming OSCE summit provides a unique opportunity to develop an appropriate mechanism, drawing on the great potential and experience of the OSCE, the United Nations and other multilateral institutions.

In the context of countering new challenges and threats, primarily terrorism and drug trafficking, we pay close attention to the implementation of counter-terrorism conventions and Security Council resolutions, and we support early adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. Kazakhstan has actively supported the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. At the initiative of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan put forward at the global Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, in April 2010, a proposal for a conference on countering the financing of terrorism.

That phenomenon is closely linked to drug trafficking, and thus combating that scourge is one of our top priorities. Accordingly, Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Center (CARICC) for combating illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs,

psychotropic substances and their precursors, located in Almaty, Kazakhstan. We believe that CARICC can and should become a platform for interaction between regional anti-drug agencies.

We also intend to take those issues forward within the framework of our activities in other international organizations, including the upcoming 2011-2012 Kazakhstan chairmanship of the Ministerial Conference of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). One of the universally accepted themes is the promotion of the ideas of tolerance, non-discrimination, and intercultural and interfaith dialogue. At the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan, Astana has become the venue for a unique forum, the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, recognized today as an effective platform for dialogue to promote ideas of interfaith peace and harmony.

As a sponsor of resolution 62/90, we welcome the efforts of Member States, UNESCO and other international organizations to conduct activities in observance of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

We commend the work of the Alliance of Civilizations and stand ready to continue to actively cooperate with it to promote the goals and objectives of the Alliance at the international level.

Based on its experience, Kazakhstan supports the active use of the capacity of authoritative regional arrangements, such as the OSCE and the OIC, in efforts to overcome nationalism, religious intolerance, racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, and we intend to work for the adoption of concrete decisions within those organizations. We are deeply convinced that today security cannot be for a single country, region or continent alone. Therefore Kazakhstan believes that all existing structures of regional and international security must coordinate their efforts and cooperate actively together.

In this context, I would like to note with great satisfaction that the first meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia and the OSCE, which was held in June 2010 in Istanbul, has laid the foundation for a future transcontinental security belt. It appears that the level of institutional development of the Conference and the growing interest in its activities on the part of Asian

countries will allow us to consider that forum as a prototype of a collective security system in Asia.

Today, the world is slowly but surely emerging from a severe financial and economic crisis. At this juncture, it is critically important to ensure that the development of a post-crisis model of development is not limited to cosmetic measures. Instead, it should produce a qualitative restructuring of the entire system of international economic relations. We believe that all the world's economic problems are rooted in the inefficiency of the existing world monetary system, which no one controls and which is not democratic.

Kazakhstan's leader has proposed that a new financial architecture be developed, with a global regulatory system to oversee financial markets at its core. Such a mechanism would allow us to avoid speculative interflows of resources that exist only on paper and a situation in which developing countries are actually financing consumption in the developed countries. The establishment of a more stable macroeconomic model, in our view, calls for the introduction of a single supranational currency, under the auspices of the United Nations.

Finding an urgent solution to environmental problems is one of our main responsibilities to future generations. It is also a prerequisite of preserving life on Earth. In this context, we have initiated plans for holding ministerial conferences for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Europe in 2010 or 2011 in Astana. The goal of these events is to build a "green bridge" between Europe and Asia and to harmonize programmes for sustainable development and environmental protection.

We appreciate the assistance provided by the international community, including the United Nations and its specialized agencies and programmes, to our country's efforts to overcome the effects of environmental disasters in the Aral Sea and Semipalatinsk regions. Given their global nature, they call for an effective new approach on the part of the donor community to solve these problems.

Kazakhstan is firmly committed to the democratization of its society and building a State based on the rule of law. In February this year, our country successfully passed its first universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council and intends to fully implement its recommendations. Reaffirming its

commitment to open and constructive cooperation in the area of human rights, Kazakhstan has sent a standing invitation to all mandate holders of the Council's special procedures.

Our country has always been and still remains open to cooperation with the international community in the protection and realization of individual rights and freedoms. With those values and ideals in mind, Kazakhstan has put forward its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the 2012-2015 term, which we hope will be supported.

Over the past 65 years the United Nations has made an enormous contribution to international peace and security on the Earth and to the solution of many social, economic, humanitarian and other problems. It is in our common interests that the United Nations continue to demonstrate leadership in promoting peace and cooperation and sustainable progress on Earth. Kazakhstan not only has consistently supported and supports the activities of the United Nations, but always seeks to contribute to the attainment of the lofty goals set by our respected Organization.

The meeting rose at 2.15 p.m.



General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

17th plenary meeting

Saturday, 25 September 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Deiss (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

**Address by His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta,
President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste**

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ramos-Horta: I have been given such a bad spot on the speaking list that I feel as if I am in a Fellini movie, speaking to an empty Hall. Still, because I believe in ghosts, I believe that the friendly ghosts of those who are not present are here to listen, and I profusely thank those who bothered to come on this Saturday afternoon.

Mr. President, in compensation for my having the worst possible time slot in the general debate, when I see you this afternoon I hope you will have a nice box of Swiss chocolates to give to me.

We will not distribute the written version of my speech because no one reads them anyway and it is a waste of paper and money. However, anyone who is curious enough about my speech will be able to find it

on the General Assembly's website. It is a lengthy speech — although I will not compete with Presidents Obama, Ahmadinejad or Chávez — so I will skip through much of it, out of respect for the representatives who have been here for a week listening to many speeches.

Still, I would fail my upbringing if I were not to thank the Mayor of New York and New Yorkers for welcoming us to their city. We sympathize with the residents of this city for the inconveniences we cause them by our presence, even if most people would agree that the United Nations and the numerous meetings held here throughout the year bring enormous tangible and non-quantifiable benefits to the city. I also would like to thank the United States federal authorities for their exceptional efforts and professionalism in providing us with a secure and friendly environment.

I have never met Mayor Bloomberg, but he has gone up in our esteem and respect because of his intellectual clarity and moral courage in standing up for the rights of American Muslims in building a cultural centre and a sacred place of worship in lower Manhattan as a venue for reflection, learning and fraternity among cultures and religions. What better place is there than lower Manhattan, near the World Trade Center, to signal the revulsion of American Muslims and moderate Muslims all over the world at the actions of some extremists? I congratulate Mayor Bloomberg for his moral courage and integrity.

I was not present in this Hall when President Ahmadinejad of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed

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this Assembly a few days ago. I was at Columbia University, addressing an equally important gathering of young students and academics from many countries, cultures and religions. So I did not hear President Ahmadinejad's latest intellectual concoctions in this Assembly. I will not question the right of anyone to speak his mind. President Ahmadinejad is entitled to believe in and regurgitate whatever intellectual, philosophical or theological concoctions his unique mind may fabricate. However, I do not agree that any of us should disregard the basic rules and practices of conduct among leaders by uttering obscenities in this Assembly. What President Ahmadinejad said in this forum in regard to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center was an obscenity. He went too far, as he has done many times before in this Assembly and in other forums, as when he has questioned the facts of the Holocaust.

Otherwise, we fully subscribe to Iran's legitimate right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and we caution the Powers that be not to hasten in reaching conclusions that may lead to irreversible, catastrophic decisions. We do have serious doubts, however, about the reliability and safety of nuclear energy. Let us not forget the lessons of the Three Mile Island accident, which occurred at 4 a.m. on 28 March 1979 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, or the even worse Chernobyl nuclear meltdown of April 1986. The recent catastrophic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico would pale by comparison with the blow-up of a nuclear energy facility. We do not know whether Iranian rulers do or do not have the desire to be an armed nuclear Power. What we do know, however, is that the possession of nuclear weapons is not a shortcut to super-Power status, as some in Asia seem to think, and does not insure anyone against twenty-first century conventional and non-conventional security threats.

Nuclear weapons were developed as a result of the tragic experiences of the Second World War and of mutual suspicion and fears pervasive among the Powers at that time. They have become obsolete. That is proven by the fact that the mighty Soviet nuclear and conventional arsenals were not able to prevent the implosion of its Empire, the liberation of hundreds of millions of people or the reunification of Germany. Nuclear weapons are not going to be of much help in the ongoing ethnic, religious and border disputes in Asia. We pray to God the Almighty and the Merciful that these weapons and others, chemical and biological,

do not ever fall into the hands of extremist non-State entities.

We gathered here from 20 to 22 September to review the progress — or lack of it — on the pledges we solemnly made before our peoples in 2000 to eliminate or at least halve poverty by 2015. In Timor-Leste, we regained independence in 2002, and in the first years of our independence we set out to rebuild our country from the ashes of the violence of the past, lay the foundations of a functioning democratic State, heal our wounds, reconcile our divided communities and normalize relations with past external adversaries. In only eight years and in spite of the overwhelming challenges facing us, we have navigated out of the storms to a new period of peace, stability and economic growth.

Timor-Leste is a least developed country, affected by pervasive poverty. We are still a fragile country, partly because we are only eight years old, and being an infant country, all the institutions of the State are young and fragile. However, the Almighty and the Merciful has blessed us with generous natural resources, such as oil and gas, enabling us to accelerate our overall development.

Timor-Leste was not yet independent in 2000, and it was not until our first Millennium Development Goal report was issued in 2004 that the first targets were set. For the past three years, Timor-Leste has enjoyed real peace and a robust economic growth of over 12 per cent. In the past two years, poverty levels have decreased by as much as 9 per cent. Infant mortality and under-five mortality rates have been reduced and have already reached the 2015 target. School enrolment has increased from 65 per cent in 2007 to 83 per cent in 2009-2010. Adult illiteracy is being gradually eliminated thanks to a joint programme between Timor-Leste and Cuba. We anticipate that, within two to three years, Timor-Leste will be completely free of illiteracy. About 30 per cent of our general State budget is allocated to public health and education. This turn-around is due largely thanks to aggressive public financing of social such programmes as direct cash transfers to the elderly, widows, the handicapped and veterans, and to determined efforts to expand cultivated areas and increase food production.

The first of the 800 Timorese medical students studying in Cuba have returned home. In addition to those studying medicine in Cuba, there are 200 more

enrolled in the medical school of our national university. In addition, more than 200 Cuban doctors have been assigned to Timor-Leste since 2004, working side by side with Timorese doctors and nurses delivering services to the remotest corners of the country and training our medical and health personnel. The members of the famous Cuban Medical Brigade are true missionaries, as deserving of the Nobel Peace Prize as Mother Teresa.

In Timor-Leste, this year we will finalize our own road map, the 2011-2030 Strategic Development Plan, which will lift our people from centuries of poverty to the level of an upper-middle-income country by 2030.

With regard to the management of our petroleum resources, we are pleased to note that the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in its most recent report of 1 July, rated Timor-Leste number one in Asia and number three in the world for sound, transparent and effective management of our oil and gas revenues.

Women make up almost 30 per cent of the deputies in our national Parliament. Key cabinet positions in the executive branch — finance, justice, social solidarity, prosecutor-general and so on — are held by women. A youth parliament, comprising 130 youth parliamentarians ranging in ages from 12 to 17 years, has been elected and will have its first formal sitting in November. I am pleased that our expectations on balanced gender representation were in fact exceeded. The youth parliament counts 68 girl and 62 boy deputies.

Timor-Leste is proud to have one of the most humanist Constitutions in the world. It prohibits the death penalty and its maximum prison sentence is 25 years. We have also ratified all core international human rights treaties. Our Constitution gives primacy to international law over domestic law, such that all our laws must conform to international law.

As the Head of State guided by humanist beliefs and the relevant provisions of our Constitution, I have issued pardons to individuals who have been tried and found guilty by the courts and have served a number of years with good behaviour. We believe that the pursuit of justice cannot be dissociated from other overwhelming values, such as compassion and understanding of mitigating circumstances.

I wish now to turn to some international issues. We appeal to President Barack Obama to sign an

executive order releasing five Cuban citizens who have languished in United States jails for over 10 years and denied family visits. Even visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross have not been authorized. The United States should likewise lift the draconian financial and economic sanctions and trade embargo against Cuba. The Cuban people are among the few in the world who are still suffering the inequities of the cold-war era. It would seem that, for some in the United States and in particular in the State of Florida, the cold war is not over.

The situation in Myanmar is an immensely complex one. It is a vast country fragmented along ethnic lines and plagued by numerous armed groups fighting with different agendas. Based on our own experience, we believe that in order to manage such complex challenges, be it in our own country, Myanmar or anywhere else, we must all show wisdom and engage in patient dialogue with those who do not agree with us so that together we can end conflict and pull our countries out of poverty.

With respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we commend the Israeli and Palestinian leaders for their renewed dialogue under the auspices of the United States Administration. To those in Palestine who, in spite of decades of suffering and humiliation, have resisted the temptation of extremism and violence, I bow. To those in Israel who have championed the cause of peace and the rights of the Palestinian people, I will say that they represent the very best of the Jewish people — a people who more than anyone else on Earth should understand the suffering and desire of others for freedom.

We urge Hamas to show statesmanship by recognizing the State of Israel. Extremism, fanaticism and indiscriminate violence do harm to the noble Palestinian quest for dignity and freedom. At the same time, we submit that Hamas and Hezbollah are genuine popular movements deeply rooted in the plight of millions of poor, dispossessed, alienated and angry in the Middle East. Labelling them terrorists and refusing to engage and build bridges with such groups is, in our view, not a sound policy.

We urge Israel, a country founded on 5,000 years of history and born of centuries of persecution and war, to show the wisdom and generosity of the Jews by ending the Gaza blockade, allowing unhindered access

for humanitarian assistance, and ending the land-grabbing and colonization of the West Bank.

On the question of Western Sahara, the aborted decolonization of that territory and the endless plight of hundreds of thousands of Saharans in camps in Algeria constitute an indictment of the international community. This is not an issue as complex as Afghanistan or Palestine. How can we believe that there will be an early resolution of these other seemingly intractable problems when there seems to be little political will to solve the Western Sahara problem?

I believe that I have already exceeded the time allocated to me by one minute and 35 seconds. I have a few more words to say about foreign aid and climate change, but I will skip that in order to respect everybody else, particularly those following me. Allow me only to say two words about United Nations reform.

More than 60 years after its founding, the United Nations has yet to undertake meaningful reform to make it more representative of the world of the twenty-first century and to become more effective. And we are not talking only about an expanded and more representative Security Council. We are talking about making the United Nations and its many agencies and programmes less bureaucratic and more efficient in their internal management and service delivery.

In regard to the Security Council, we restate our view that it has to be expanded to accommodate the new demographic and economic realities of the twenty-first century. Major regional Powers like India and Brazil must be granted permanent member status in the Security Council.

In concluding, on behalf of our people I thank the international community for the steady and generous assistance provided to us in our years of need. We would not have been able to achieve the progress of the past years without the understanding of our friends and partners.

We can all do better in Timor-Leste and elsewhere, and we must. With humility we acknowledge our failings and limitations. We are determined to live up to the expectations of our people and to lead them towards a peaceful and prosperous future.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste for the statement he has just made.

Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Klaus: First, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the very responsible post of President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

I have the privilege of representing the Czech Republic, a country in the very heart of Europe that has been actively involved in United Nations activities from the very beginning and will continue to be so. We are actively involved in a number of United Nations bodies, and Czech soldiers and experts have participated in United Nations peacekeeping missions for many decades. It is in our interests for this Organization to remain a respected high-level forum, contributing to prosperity, stability and peaceful solutions to conflicts around the world.

It has been said here many times in the past few days that today's world is very different from that of 1945, when this Organization was founded by 51 States. It now consists of 192. That is not merely a quantitative change; it is much more. My country is therefore deeply convinced that the structure of the United Nations also needs to be different, especially that of the Security Council, which should be reformed to reflect the geopolitical, economic and demographic reality of the twenty-first century. It is frustrating that discussions of such reform have gone on for the past

16 years without results. It is time to come up with concrete results, and my country is ready to support them.

Changes of this kind are necessary; on the other hand, some things must continue unchanged. I do not believe that the United Nations needs to search for a new mission. Its goals should remain those defined in the original Charter: to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, and to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems. The United Nations should not diverge from these principles. It should not search for alternative or substitute projects to replace those that enhance peace, freedom and democracy. It should remain an intergovernmental platform, based on the plurality of views of its Member States and on mutual respect for their sometimes differing positions.

Let me briefly touch on two issues that form part of the current United Nations agenda. The first is the worldwide economic crisis and the methods used to overcome it. I am afraid that we are moving in the wrong direction. The anti-crisis measures that have been proposed and already partly implemented follow from the assumption that the crisis was a failure of markets and that the right way out is more regulation of markets. This is a mistaken assumption. It will not be possible to prevent any future crises by implementing substantial, market-damaging macroeconomic and regulatory Government interventions, as is being done now. That will only destroy markets, and with them the chances for economic growth and prosperity in developed and developing countries alike.

The solution to this or any other crisis does not lie in increasing protectionism, and it is a positive factor that most Governments have behaved quite rationally in this respect. Nor does the solution lie in more bureaucracy, in creating new governmental or supranational agencies, or in aiming at global governance of the world's economy. On the contrary, this is the time for international organizations, including the United Nations, to reduce their spending, slim down their administrations and leave the solutions to the Governments of the Member States, which are directly accountable to the citizens of their countries.

Developing countries should not be prevented from growing economically. They need access to foreign markets and they need free trade. It was in this forum last year that I emphasized that we must pay

attention to the costs and benefits of our decisions. Developing countries must not be forced into agreements on ever more ambitious targets in the fight against climate change, particularly at a time when the developed countries themselves are far from meeting those targets. The United Nations should not have an all-encompassing agenda. It should not turn away from political topics towards scientific ones. It is here not to determine what science is, but to engage its Member States in rational and reasoned debate about political issues. The most harmful political debate we have witnessed in the past couple of years is about the climate and global warming.

We should not give up on elemental values and principles that most of us share, and this brings me to the second issue I wish to mention here today — nuclear non proliferation. In April, my country hosted an important event during which the President of Russia and the President of the United States signed the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. We see the Treaty as an important step forward and as a visible sign of our efforts to make our complicated world safer. Let us hope that it will be taken further in the foreseeable future.

We do not dispute the right of any country to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes, but it must do so in a responsible way. It is not possible for some countries to ignore agreed and respected international standards, to threaten stability in their regions and to increase the dangers of proliferation.

The United Nations is a unique forum at which small and big countries alike are represented. They are countries with different political, economic and social systems; different neighbours; different historical experiences and geopolitical positions; and, more importantly, different levels of income, wealth and development. This is precisely what makes the United Nations unique and irreplaceable. Instead of increasingly becoming a source of funds for various, sometimes very dubious non-governmental organizations that — without any accountability or control — seek to profit from United Nations activities, the United Nations should strive to be an efficient body in which States and their peoples are represented. Its task is not to push for global governance and play the central role in it. The United Nations exists primarily to enhance friendly relations among its Members and

to look for solutions to problems that cannot be confined to national boundaries.

I wish you every success in your office, Mr. President, and I would like to assure you that the Czech Republic will continue to be an active Member of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Czech Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Anote Tong, President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kiribati

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kiribati.

Mr. Anote Tong, President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kiribati, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Anote Tong, President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kiribati, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Tong: Every year, we gather in this General Assembly Hall to take stock of our achievements in the pursuit of a more peaceful, more secure and a better world for all citizens of the global community.

As it emerged from the ashes of devastating world wars, the United Nations heralded a new era and a new world order of international cooperation in the pursuit of international peace and security. It is premised on the principles of sovereign equality and peaceful coexistence.

Taking stock of what we have achieved since then, we can say today that we have been successful in preventing many of the scourges that have challenged humanity, including world wars and widespread disease. But as we rid our global society of those

injustices, new and emerging forms of injustices now threaten our global security.

I believe that climate change remains the greatest moral challenge of our time. While it affects all nations of this planet, the irony is that it is the poorest and smallest countries, which have made the least contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, that are paying the ultimate price in order that the lifestyles and development agenda of some countries may be maintained. Where is the justice in that?

The Copenhagen Conference failed to meet the expectations of many, but especially of those countries on the front line for which the threat of climate change is no longer a matter of speculation but one of survival, and therefore of great urgency. There is a tendency in much of the world to view climate change as a distant and gradual process whose harmful effects are remote possible and not worthy of much attention. I have said in various forums that, for low-lying island countries like Kiribati, Tuvalu, the Maldives and the Marshall Islands, among other similarly vulnerable countries, climate change is a matter of survival and of increasing urgency.

Already we are witnessing major damage to infrastructure and property as a consequence of higher-than-normal tides and storm surges. Coastal erosion in heavily populated areas is occurring at a rate that exceeds the Governments' capacity to respond. Lack of resources is exacerbating the situation. Coastlines continue to be eroded and homes and properties continue to be damaged.

Long before our islands are inundated by the rising seas, they will become uninhabitable as freshwater aquifers are contaminated by saltwater intrusion from rising tides. Increasing demand for resources to undertake effective responses to climate change impacts will become a dominant feature of our development agenda. I truly hope, therefore, that I can during this session communicate the deep sense of urgency and growing sense of despair besetting our people in the face of this oncoming catastrophe.

On the basis of current scientific projections, the Copenhagen Accord does not provide the means to guarantee our future survival, and therefore we did not sign it in Copenhagen. We have subsequently associated ourselves with the Accord, essentially for the following reasons. First, we are of the belief that the Accord at least represents a positive step towards

an international governance system on climate change. Secondly, we have the expectation that further, forthcoming scientific evidence will unequivocally determine the targets to be agreed upon. Finally and most importantly, we believe that our support for the Accord will ensure the flow of urgently needed adaptation funds. I regret to say that, to date, we have not been able to access any of the fast-start funds pledged.

I acknowledge that many elements of any international regime on climate change will take several years to conclude, but I also believe that there is common ground on which there is no real debate. The urgent need for the flow of adaptation funds to address the more urgent adaptation needs of the most vulnerable countries is a matter over which there is general consensus. It is not a matter to negotiate or procrastinate over; if we do, it will be too late for some countries and any subsequent agreement will be meaningless. It is also important that adaptation funds not be regarded as additional development funds by either development partners or recipient countries, but be provided and applied for the sole purpose of adaptation to climate change.

I believe that we need to modify our approach to Mexico if we are to succeed. I believe that we have a moral obligation to reach agreement on a legally binding framework that regulates our ability to pursue policies that harm others. For very obvious reasons, I do not believe that any country should have the right to exercise sovereignty over its greenhouse gas emissions. In my view, any alternative to a legally binding framework is simply unacceptable and would have potentially destabilizing consequences.

The experience at Copenhagen taught us that if we are to make any progress, we must acknowledge our differences and discuss ways around them rather than allow them to dominate the international agenda behind the process. In this regard, we believe that trust and mutual respect are indispensable to the process.

Climate change offers the international community an opportunity to reflect upon the future direction of our relations as sovereign nations. I believe that the climate change challenge provides us with the opportunity to be more innovative in our concept of international governance. Our current arrangement is similar to that of State Governments not

accepting federal authority within a federal system. One can imagine the chaos.

While other countries are focusing their efforts and resources on their sustainable development, we, the most vulnerable countries, continue to spend the limited resources we have on fighting the continuous onslaught of the rising seas and storm surges on our homes and livelihoods. It is no surprise therefore that we are off-track to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of our sustainable development agenda under our national development plan, the Pacific Plan and the Mauritius Strategy. For every step we take forward, we are knocked back two or three due to the challenges we face, which are exacerbated by climate change.

In this regard, it is imperative that the pledges made at Copenhagen for fast-start funds to assist vulnerable countries like Kiribati to adapt to the impact of climate change and sea-level rise be mobilized at the earliest possible opportunity. This is a matter of great and increasing urgency.

We acknowledge the critical role of our environment as the pillar of sustainable development. Maintaining the health of our biodiversity within our oceans and ecosystems faces the very same challenges that we have so far failed to address in respect of our atmosphere. It is imperative, therefore, that we undertake the commitment to put in place now the measures needed in order to avoid the mistakes we have made with climate change. In pursuit of this, we in Kiribati have designated the largest marine protected area and marine World Heritage Site, the Phoenix Islands Protected Area. It covers an area of more than 400,000 square kilometres, representing some 11 per cent of our exclusive economic zone. The Protected Area is the result of a collaborative partnership with Conservation International and the New England Aquarium. It provides a natural breeding ground for tropical fisheries and ocean ecosystems. It is a natural laboratory for the study of such ecosystems and the impact of climate change in a pristine area virtually untouched by human activity.

The preservation of that Area is our gift to humanity and our contribution to international biodiversity conservation efforts to significantly reduce biodiversity loss in this International Year of Biodiversity. Even now, as we confront the possibility that our islands will become uninhabitable within the

century due to the rising sea level, we recognize the value of protecting something that is the common heritage of humanity.

Kiribati and the Pacific are committed to the sustainable conservation and management of their ocean ecosystem through the Micronesia Challenge, the Coral Triangle Initiative, the Nauru Agreement and the many other national efforts throughout the region to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems. At its meeting last month in Vanuatu, the Pacific Islands Forum endorsed the Pacific Oceanscape Framework, which promotes collaboration and cooperation among marine protected areas in the Pacific region. Initiatives such as the Pacific 2020 Challenge and a novel Pangaea World concept of green development through knowledge economies link those initiatives to the countries of the Pacific Rim and beyond.

Our message to the international community is that the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems in the Pacific is not important only to the sustainable development of Pacific peoples. It is also of vital significance to the rest of the world. Support from the international community in protecting ecosystems in the Pacific, and indeed elsewhere, should not be viewed as a handout, but as an investment for future generations of this planet.

Last year, we all called for a new world order. We all acknowledged that our great Organization must evolve to reflect the realities of our time — a time in which new and emerging security threats and injustices such as climate change are challenging the credibility of our international system of governance; a time in which the future survival of some nations is seriously in question; a time when all those countries with the ability to do so must contribute to the prevention of that calamity or be forever judged in history.

We note that tensions remain high in certain regions, notably in the Middle East and the Korean peninsula. For the sake of those of us on the front line of the major global challenges, let us pray that great understanding and stability will prevail. For while we, as small nations, may seem not to be affected by such events, they serve to distract the focus of attention away from the real challenges facing the international community and our planet today.

It is gratifying to note the easing of tensions and improvement of relations across the Taiwan Straits — no doubt, a most welcome development for all in that

region. We also welcome the inclusion of Taiwan in the World Health Assembly, and we hope that similar understanding will prevail in respect of other international institutions in which Taiwan can participate and contribute meaningfully for the good of humanity.

As we chart the path towards a new world order, we must address the fundamental threats to the very existence of the units that make up our Organization. As the so called community of nations, we must be able to guarantee the survival of members of our community by addressing this defining challenge of our era. Climate change must be addressed before it is too late for those nations on the front line and for the whole of humanity.

At this time, we need compassionate, visionary and responsible leadership to direct our path towards a more secure and more just world. We need to share the solution, and we need to act as one in Mexico. We owe it to our future generations to act, and to act now. Maintaining the status quo is simply not an option.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Kiribati for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Anote Tong, President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kiribati, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

Address by Mr. Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi.

Mr. Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Rufyikiri (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to convey to the Assembly the warm and fraternal greetings of His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, who has just been re-elected for a second term of five years. He had planned to take part in these meetings himself, but the Unity International Foundation insisted on awarding him the Rising Star of Africa prize for his role in building and promoting peace, and that led him to delegate attending the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals and the general debate of the Assembly's sixty-fifth session to me.

We wish to congratulate the President of the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session and to reiterate the thanks of the Burundi delegation to his predecessor for his remarkable work. We also pay due tribute to our Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his involvement in the follow-up to Assembly resolutions and for the important guidance that he continues to give our Organization. His visit to Burundi on 9 June 2010 is a clear sign of his commitment to peacebuilding and to strengthening the democracy regained in our country at great cost.

Burundi is participating in the sixty-fifth session following the top-to-bottom renewal of national institutions. For the first time in Burundi's history, the democratically elected institutions have completed their term of office. That powerfully demonstrates the political maturity and resolve of the people of Burundi to break with the turbulent past in order to invest in the peace, stability and reconciliation that are prerequisites to sustainable development.

We take this opportunity to reiterate the thanks of the Government and people of Burundi for the role of the international community, the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, the European Parliament, the East African Community, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States, friendly countries and various organizations in participating in the funding and observation of the aforementioned elections, which were peaceful, transparent and fair and in accordance with international standards.

For its part, the party that won the elections is aware of the absolute need to promote national reconciliation and political tolerance as much as it can. From the day after the first round of the election and

then in his inaugural speech, the President of the Republic himself expressed his resolve and that of the winning party to govern Burundi for and with all the people of Burundi. Furthermore, Burundi's Constitution also provides for political inclusion mechanisms in managing the State's affairs.

During the new Parliament, the Government of Burundi is committed to following its peacebuilding programme and strengthening security for all, in particular by completing disarmament of the civilian population and the socio-economic reinsertion of demobilized individuals and returnees. Furthermore, the Government of Burundi will particularly emphasize regional cooperation and integration, as well as enhancing security in its geographical area, together with neighbouring countries.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Promoting good governance in its various dimensions is also one of the main concerns of Burundi's Government. With regard to political governance, it will continue to promote the rights of political parties, including by strengthening the spirit of dialogue between political partners.

With respect to economic governance, there will be efforts to improve business conditions to encourage both national and foreign investment. The Government of Burundi reaffirms its determination and zero-tolerance commitment to combat financial corruption and fraud.

In the area of the judiciary, every possible effort will be made to combat impunity with respect to any type of crime, and transitional justice will be promoted during this Parliament.

Concerning socio-economic development, the Government of Burundi will focus every effort possible on combating poverty, in particular through development of priority production sectors, namely, agriculture and livestock, energy, social infrastructure, tourism, environmental renewal and new information and communication technologies. We will give special attention to developing public-private partnerships with a view to sustained economic growth.

In the social domain, the Government of Burundi will concentrate on the education and health sectors to combat ignorance and disease. To meet crucial needs in those areas, many schools and clinics will be built

throughout the country. Furthermore, the services in these two sectors will also be improved.

Relaunching and promoting the Burundian economy depends also on consolidating regional groups and developing projects and programmes that integrate common interests. In that framework, the Government of Burundi will play a larger role in the promotion of regional organizations of which it is a member, such as the Economic Community of the Great Lake Countries, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, whose Executive Secretariat we host, the East African Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and others. That ambitious programme requires consistent support for its implementation. Thus Burundi clearly requires various forms of support.

To that end, we take the opportunity of this forum to make a strong appeal to the international community, to the United Nations system and to the countries represented here and to charitable organizations to continue their tireless support to the Government of Burundi with the ultimate aim of allowing it to lay the foundations for long-term development and for solidifying the achievements made in terms of peace, democracy, stability and reconciliation.

In the context of international relations and relations between States, Burundi is convinced that the issue of global governance in general and economic governance in particular remains a major concern of most of our countries. Thus promotion of equity must become the leitmotif and the warhorse of the organizations of which our respective States are full members.

Burundi desires additional efforts to allow developing countries sufficient representation in the international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and others. We believe that is the way to promote a fairer and more geographically balanced world.

Burundi is committed to the African Union's position on Security Council reform, in particular that the African continent should have two permanent seats with all of the privileges held by the five permanent members.

Today the entire world is confronting a number of challenges and natural disasters, some of which are

linked to climate change. Developing countries in general and African countries in particular are the most harshly affected, because of a lack of resources to deal with such challenges.

It is high time that countries agree to take more audacious measures in order to provide the financing necessary to combat the negative effects of climate change, by stimulating and promoting in particular technology transfer and without forgetting capacity-building in the poorest and thus the most vulnerable countries. By effectively combating the effects of climate change, our countries will inevitably resolve in part the problem of food insecurity, which is also a significant threat to sustainable development.

In that light, we call upon the wealthy countries to act in favour of developing countries, particularly post-conflict countries such as Burundi, through multiple, ongoing and significant support to key social and economic sectors. It is urgent that all development partners respect the promises they have made to developing countries in general and those countries in Africa in particular by increasing official development assistance.

Burundi — whose stability has benefited from the excellent attention and considerable support of United Nations entities, the international community and friendly countries — remains very concerned by the issue of the maintenance of international peace and security. It reaffirms its commitment to cooperate with the United Nations in consolidating the achievements made with regard to peace and stability and in handling the finances necessary for its socio-economic development.

Furthermore, in terms of international solidarity, all countries must combine efforts to make this world a harbour of peace. For that reason, Burundi is taking an active part in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire to bring peace to that country, the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

With respect to Somalia, Burundi is committed on the ground despite the many problems its troops are encountering. We reiterate our request to the United Nations with regard to improving the living and working conditions of the AMISOM forces. We take this opportunity to recall the promises made in that

regard by the Secretary-General when he visited Burundi on 9 June. We also call on other countries to deploy additional troops so that AMISOM can become a truly continental mission able to fulfil its mandate.

In closing, Burundi welcomes the determination and commitment of the United Nations to make our world one of peace, democracy, tolerance and development, where individual and collective rights and freedoms are clearly protected. Therefore, we encourage everyone to go forward towards that noble mission. Our wish is that the next session of the General Assembly may take place in a context where most of the conflicts currently threatening some countries and the world as a whole will have been resolved.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Second Vice-President of Burundi for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Gervais Ruyikiri, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Alik L. Alik, Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Mr. Alik L. Alik, Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Alik L. Alik, Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Alik (Federated States of Micronesia): Allow me to congratulate Mr. Deiss on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. He has taken on that formidable task at a crucial period for our United Nations. I assure him of Micronesia's full support. I would also like to pay tribute to his esteemed predecessor for his distinguished leadership.

Sadly, I wish to begin my statement by expressing the sincere sympathy of the people and Government of the Federated States of Micronesia for the many victims of recent natural disasters

everywhere. Having been victims of natural disasters ourselves, our hearts go out to the victims of the recent hurricanes, earthquakes, mudslides and floods that are now occurring on an unprecedented scale and with increasing frequency and devastating intensity all over our planet. Overwhelming evidence points to one common denominator in all those events, and that is global climate change.

I am deeply honoured to address the General Assembly, at its sixty-fifth session, for the first time on behalf of the Federated States of Micronesia. This Assembly accords Micronesia and the small island developing States an extraordinary privilege to bring to the whole world the most pressing issues affecting us that demand our collective response.

Despite the many years of negotiations to curb its devastating effects, the climate change crisis continues to haunt us. The negotiating process has moved along very slowly, while in stark contrast the rapid increases in the incidence and severity of environmental hazards continue to take their toll, with devastating results. I cannot help but think of the needless human suffering everywhere, and what the future holds for my country and the small island developing States if business continues as usual.

As a small island developing State, Micronesia's future is intrinsically linked to the global climate. That is why we are gravely concerned by the acute environmental problems related to the extreme vulnerability of our islands to sea-level rise and climate change. Those threats are indisputable, and delays in adopting a comprehensive and legally binding agreement to avert this global disaster are without excuse.

In Micronesia, we are deeply disappointed at the glacial progress in the negotiating sessions and climate change meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. At the same time, we are growing increasingly alarmed by the prospect of shrinking ambitions for the meeting in Cancún, Mexico, later this year. That is not an acceptable response to a crisis of enormous proportions, certainly not for Micronesia and not for any of the small island developing States, who need fast action. This is an issue of survival for us.

We must find a better response — a genuine response that supports mitigation and adaptation measures that will achieve significant reductions in

greenhouse gas emissions and thus preserve the integrity of our Earth's environment and also the livelihoods of its inhabitants. My island nation and the small island developing States, for that matter, are not major contributors to the causes of climate change. All present know that. But we are nevertheless determined in our efforts to contribute to finding solutions.

For its part, Micronesia continues to take the lead to combat climate change by utilizing the opportunities under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Through the Montreal Protocol we can solve a big part of the climate change problem. That is why Micronesia has developed a proposal with the support of Mauritius, the Marshall Islands, Seychelles and the Philippines that calls for the phasing down of the production and use of hydrofluorocarbons. Under our proposal we will be able to eliminate one of the greenhouse gases listed under the Kyoto Protocol, and we are encouraged that other countries, such as Canada, the United States and Mexico, already have come forward with similar proposals.

Frankly, we have been delighted by the interest shown in our proposal so far, and I commend it to the Assembly's attention. Today, I encourage all delegations to consider supporting it. Our collective action is imperative if we are to effectively curb and reverse global warming. That is the kind of collaboration that I encourage here.

Just as we are delighted by our Montreal Protocol proposal, we are equally proud of an initiative within our Pacific region, launched in August by the Governments of the Republics of the Marshall Islands and Palau and my own Government at the margins of the forty-first Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Vanuatu. This is the Green Energy Micronesia Initiative, which calls for a 20 per cent improvement in energy efficiency by suppliers in areas such as transportation and electric power generation, a 30 per cent improvement in energy use by end users and a 20 per cent electricity generation through renewable energy by 2020. As island countries with a total dependence on fossil fuels for our energy generation, it is no longer economically, financially and environmentally sustainable to continue down that path. We must look towards developing, utilizing and embracing our renewable sources of energy.

Our prospect for success will remain grim with our limited capacity and available financial resources. We encourage and call upon our development partners and the international community to support our efforts, including through increased financial support, transfer of technology and capacity-building.

In our seemingly idyllic settings as island nations, it may seem to many around the world that we live an easy life and demand action only from others. However, the reality is that our island nations are actively playing our part in maintaining, and promoting the protection of, our Planet Earth. We accept our responsibility for conserving the biodiversity of our islands and waters and for using resources in a sustainable manner.

That is why Micronesia and our Micronesian sister nations the Republics of the Marshall Islands and of Palau, as well as the Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, continue to promote the Micronesia Challenge to conserve at least 30 per cent of the near-shore marine resources and 20 per cent of terrestrial resources across our Micronesian region by 2020.

Given our individual limitations, we can confront these challenges only through regional collective actions. I want to express our utmost gratitude to those countries and international organizations that continue to support the Micronesia Challenge and help us achieve our goals. Being small island countries with limited resources, we see realistic success in collaborative partnership with the international community.

Micronesia will continue to address the protection of the ocean and its resources. As a Pacific island country with one of the largest exclusive economic zones in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, we ascribe particular importance to the ocean and its resources. The ocean has a fundamental and critical bearing on our food security and economic future. However, human activities on the planet are significantly affecting our ocean and can bring about disastrous consequences for our food security and sustainable development.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in our zone remains of great concern, as that abhorrent practice continues with its sophistication and multinational criminal operations. We do maintain high expectations that through the support of the

international community we can combat that illegal activity, which threatens the sustainability of our fish stocks and deprives our people of potential economic benefits.

To reverse already discernable trends towards the disappearance of key tuna species that were once thought inexhaustible, early this year the leaders of the Pacific countries that are parties to the Nauru Agreement signed the Koror Declaration, agreeing to introduce further conservation measures to protect key tuna stocks. One of the measures agreed to is to close off additional high-seas areas to purse seine fishing by vessels licensed to fish our Nauru Agreement waters.

Micronesia is fully committed and will work with its fellow parties to the Nauru Agreement and the wider international community to ensure the sustainability of our tuna resources. We will hold violators accountable through internationally agreed mechanisms to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in our waters and the Western and Central Pacific Ocean region.

Our oceans and our exclusive economic zones are getting a great deal of international attention because of the potential for economic exploitation. We assign the highest priority to greater economic participation in all aspects of that exploitation. Increased economic participation is a major goal for all countries in the Pacific having considerable marine resources — not just Micronesia.

However, our participation in the exploitation of our own marine resources for economic development is held back by a lack of experience and because much of our basic infrastructure still needs to be supported and developed. On the overall scoreboard, the Pacific small island developing States have not claimed their rightful share of their own fisheries resources. International support has to be given to help us build our capacities not only in negotiating agreements and developing our fisheries industries but in realizing a greater share of the benefits from the catch of fish stocks from our own exclusive economic zone.

In this review year for both the Millennium Development Goals and the Mauritius Strategy for Small Island Developing States, we must take full advantage of both occasions and rise to the challenge to meet our world's new and emerging needs.

One of the major preoccupations of the General Assembly over the last 15 years has been the reform of the United Nations. I do not need to belabour the issue, as all present are aware of Micronesia's long-standing position, especially in regard to the reform of the Security Council. For permanent membership, we reiterate our support for Japan and India from our Asia and Pacific region. From other regions, Germany and Brazil also deserve equal consideration. We call for accelerated efforts to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Peace in the Middle East remains elusive, but we have high hopes that the resumption of direct talks recently in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere between the Israelis and the Palestinians will pave the way to a lasting peace and a final settlement with a two-State solution. The whole world has a stake in the Middle East peace process. Micronesia fully supports the peace process and urges all members of this Assembly to play a constructive role and work towards an outcome that brings permanent peace and security to the Middle East. I want to express my profound gratitude to the United States, Egypt, Jordan and the Quartet for their critical roles and leadership in finding a solution to this formidable challenge. For it to be met, we must respond with our collective action and support.

I have been most privileged to have this opportunity to address the Assembly on behalf of my small island country. As I close my statement, I want to reassure this Assembly that Micronesia will continue to do its part as a responsible Member of this Organization.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Alik L. Alik, Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Sheikh Hasina (Bangladesh) (*spoke in Bangla; English text provided by the delegation*): I warmly congratulate Mr. Deiss on his well-deserved election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I believe his wise and experienced leadership will bring great success to the Assembly's proceedings. I also congratulate Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his laudable contribution as Assembly President in its sixty-fourth session. I also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless service to the United Nations and to world peace.

Bangladesh is a secular, progressive nation fulfilling the promise of democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law that were made by my father — the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the greatest Bengali of all times — from this podium 36 years ago (see A/PV.2243). That has also been in consonance with the objectives of the United Nations, which remains the last abode where the hopes and aspirations of the hapless people of the world can be fulfilled.

Bangladesh has also been supporting United Nations efforts to establish democracy, human rights, peace and security, as well as taking effective steps to combat terrorism and external threats worldwide. I, too, am committed to ensuring this continuity.

Bangladesh has established an international crimes tribunal to try persons responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including genocide, arson and rape, committed during our war of liberation in 1971 and immediately thereafter. That action is in accord with the rule of law as reflected in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which we have ratified and which is aimed at bringing perpetrators of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity to justice. I believe that only justice can heal the unforgivable, deadly wrongs of the past.

Here, I sadly recall the evil act of terror on 15 August 1975 that took the life of my father and the

Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and 18 members of my family, including my mother, sisters-in-law and my three brothers, one of whom was only 10 years old. Even I have been a target of a series of assassination attempts ever since my return home from exile in 1981.

The most horrendous period was when our secular democratic party, the Awami League, was in opposition, from 2001 to 2006. At that time thousands of our party workers, supporters and followers of the religious minority who voted for our secular party were mercilessly killed in systematic terrorist acts of the BNP/Jamaat-e-Islami alliance Government. The most audacious act was the dastardly open grenade attack on 21 August 2004 directed against me at a public rally being held to protest those terrorist attacks and killings. By the time a dozen grenades had taken their toll, 24 innocent people, including our party's Secretary for Women's Affairs, Mrs. Ivy Rahman — the wife of our current President — lay dead, and over 500 people were seriously injured.

There have also been attempts on members of my family, but never have we bowed before the forces of terror. As victims of repeated terrorist attacks, my family and I know this menace well. Clearly, our rejection of terrorism is total, as is our determination to eliminate it in all its forms. I want to unequivocally state that terrorism will not be allowed on the soil of Bangladesh, and that is precisely why we are a party to all terrorism-related United Nations conventions and accord them our full support.

Our firm policy against terrorism and our love for peace led me to negotiate the 1997 Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, thus ending decades of internal conflict, and a peaceful resolution of the violent uprising of our paramilitary border forces in 2009. In the international sphere, our commitment to peace, which is essential for development, is reflected in our unflinching support for United Nations peacekeeping missions. Since 1988 Bangladesh has sent 97,000 troops to 24 countries as part of 32 such missions. In that period we have lost the precious lives of 92 valiant soldiers.

Our present troop contribution has made Bangladesh number one among countries contributing troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Sadly, despite that involvement, our presence in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)

remains negligible, as is our voice in planning strategies of peacekeeping missions. In all fairness, we should have proportionate representation in DPKO.

Bangladesh has been adversely affected by global warming, food insecurity, population displacement and diminished biodiversity, among other problems, and is faced with serious threats caused by climate change and global warming. Although our share of carbon gas emissions is negligible, we are their worst victim. The increasing frequency and ferocity of floods, cyclones, droughts and other natural disasters caused by that phenomenon continue to create havoc through the lives lost and the resources destroyed.

Consequently, attaining the Millennium Development Goals is becoming a more difficult challenge. Climate migrants are already overcrowding our cities, putting great stress on our limited infrastructure facilities and causing social disorder. The situation could become catastrophic with a one-metre rise in the sea level due to global warming. That would inundate one quarter of Bangladesh, impacting 11 per cent of our population and leading to mass migration.

To meet those challenges, we have adopted a 134-point adaptation and mitigation action plan. Those points include dredging major rivers to restrict flooding, recovering cultivable lands for settling displaced people and increasing capacity to produce more grain foods. Other plans include afforesting 20 per cent of the land area by 2015, creating a huge carbon sink; protecting biodiversity; strengthening coasts and river banks with green belts; modernizing disaster management with community participation; developing crop varieties attuned to climate change; changing agricultural practices; using clean coal technology; and adopting nuclear power and renewable energy. Meanwhile, over 14,000 shelters for cyclone victims have been strategically located to cope with cyclonic disasters.

Implementing the action plan requires enormous funds. An immediate measure has been the establishment of a Climate Change Trust Fund with our own resources, and a Climate Change Resilience Fund with assistance from development partners. At the international level, at the fifteenth Climate Change Conference of Parties — COP 15 — last year, we worked hard for a legally binding agreement and for an international climate fund to assist countries most vulnerable to climate change. The compromise was the

Copenhagen Accord, which has so far failed to deliver its promises.

Therefore, I urge the world leaders at the sixteenth Conference — COP 16 — this year to conclude, in their wisdom, a positive agreement based on the Bali Plan of Action, with agreed cuts in greenhouse gas emissions and real contributions to the international climate fund. I also urge them to adopt, at COP 16, measures to ameliorate the adverse impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable countries, like Bangladesh, small island developing States like the Maldives, and landlocked countries like Bhutan and Nepal, among other least developed countries (LDCs).

The world is yet to recover from the world economic crisis, and LDCs as well as developed countries are suffering from reduced exports. Those crises are due to inequity and injustice resulting from an unfair international structure, which remains mostly unchanged. The Bretton Woods institutions must now accommodate a greater presence of developing countries, especially least developed countries. While the Bretton Woods institutions can deal with long-term development assistance, Bangladesh proposes the establishment of a special fund under United Nations auspices to deal exclusively with Special Drawing Rights and grants. We also propose that all stakeholders respect country-led ownership of all development projects, as enshrined in the Accra Agenda for Action.

The least developed countries surely welcome the development assistance they receive from developed countries. They would, however, benefit more through receiving liberal trade concessions such as duty and quota-free market access, trade capacity-building, et cetera. Least developed countries also seek a speedy end to the World Trade Organization's Doha Round of the World Trade Organization trade negotiations and fulfilment of the commitments by the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to provide 0.7 per cent of gross national income to official development assistance, of which 0.2 per cent will be directed at least developed countries, as affirmed in the Brussels Programme of Action.

The least developed countries have also been affected by unemployment at home and by obstacles to migration for jobs abroad. Since remittances form a significant part of their gross domestic product,

economic recovery measures should assure employment opportunities and all rights of migrant workers, especially those from least developed countries.

However, amid the travails of the past years, Bangladesh has fared reasonably well in maintaining an annual GDP growth rate of 6 per cent. That was possible due to our pragmatic policies on food production, agriculture, rural development, inflation control and keeping food and essentials prices within reach of the poor. During our previous Government, from 1996 to 2001, our policies on food security made Bangladesh self-sufficient in food, which led to our winning the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Ceres Award. This time around, with the implementation of the national food policy, aimed at stable prices of fuel, fertilizer, seeds and other farm inputs, our Government has succeeded again in ensuring sustained food supply to all.

Our Government's aim is also to use information and communications technology (ICT) to accelerate our socio-economic development. Therefore, we are implementing ICT Act 2009 and ICT Policy 2009 to build the requisite infrastructure and extend ICT to every nook and corner of Bangladesh. Already, educational institutions, local government institutions and rural communities are being connected to Internet services. The process includes an e-centre for rural communities, connecting 8,500 post offices; a high-tech park; a network of e governance; and efforts to strengthen the telecommunication network and satellite communication.

Our e-services are now focused on improving agricultural information delivery, market access, education, health care, early warning systems for disasters, law and order, and social safety net payments. Also being implemented is an aggressive e-leadership programme among members of Parliament, top policymakers, field administrators and local administrators. We had already transformed 100 Union Parishads to host e-centres in 2009, and we are now expediting the process to cover all 4,500 Union Parishads by the end of this year. In short, our Government is determined to achieve a digital Bangladesh and transform it into a middle-income country by 2021, the golden jubilee year of our nation's independence.

Simultaneously, our Government's aim is to attain 100 per cent primary school enrolment by 2011 and 100 per cent literacy rate by 2014. Our highest budget allocation goes to education. Tuition and books are now free for students up to grade 12. Computer and Internet facilities are being provided free of charge to schools in order to familiarize students with their use. To encourage school attendance, we have started providing lunch to students and cash incentives to parents.

Though Bangladesh has achieved the Millennium Development Goal target of gender equality at the secondary level, our plan is to provide free tuition to girls up to the undergraduate level. This is because we firmly believe that women's equal involvement is vital for a nation's development. Gender equity and human development are our top priority concerns.

Our Government has revived the national women's development policy, adopted during our last tenure of office, that is, 1996 to 2001. At present, besides the Prime Minister, the leader of the opposition, the deputy leader and a whip, there are five other women Cabinet ministers and 45 members of Parliament in reserved seats. Moreover, 19 women members of Parliament have been directly elected. Women also occupy 30 per cent of reserved seats in all local governments. They are encouraged to participate in politics and administration, and are recruited in all professions, including the armed services. They are also serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We have made arrangements to provide pensions to distressed and widowed women, as well as residential accommodation for both men and women in old peoples' homes. Our social safety nets also include programmes for minorities, the marginalized, the disabled and the mentally challenged; ashrayan, or homes for the homeless; the "one home, one farm" policy to alleviate poverty; and cash and food transfer programmes.

A new policy provides for the employment of one member from every poor family. Another new initiative is the national services policy for providing youth and women with employment and skills development. Moreover, research opportunities have led to new discoveries, particularly with respect to climate-change-resilient crops. A recent success is genome sequencing of the jute fibre, ensuring improved quality

of jute products, a biodegradable option to hazardous synthetic products.

Health is another area receiving special attention, with the implementation of the national health policy adopted during our previous term of office. This policy provides for the establishment of one community clinic for every 6,000 people. Our plan is to locate 18,000 such clinics in the first phase, to extend basic health services into people's homes. For safe motherhood, a national strategy for maternal health has been adopted, with a programme to reduce the infant mortality rate to 15 from the current 54 per 1,000 live births.

Our target is to complete 100 per cent immunization by the end of our present tenure of Government. Since my Government assumed office, the maternal mortality rate has been reduced from 2.9 to 2.6 and infant mortality to such a significant extent that our successes have been recognized with an award by the United Nations.

Indeed, despite the recent world food, energy, economic and climate change crises, Bangladesh, with the support of United Nations agencies and bilateral and multilateral partners, has made satisfactory progress. In fact, our achievement with respect to MDG 1, on poverty alleviation, MDG 2, on universal primary education, and MDG 3, on gender equality and women's empowerment, are encouraging and on track. Our Government, through its sincere efforts, intends to raise 12 million people out of poverty, which would halve the number of people now living in that sad state by the MDG deadline of 2015.

Our unflinching commitment to peace finds expression in our annual flagship Assembly resolution on the culture of peace (see resolution 64/80). Recent years have shown an extraordinary record of sponsorships because of the reference to the International Mother Language Day. Ever since the Day was adopted by UNESCO in recognition of the language martyrs who gave their lives in 1952 for Bangla, their mother tongue, it has been celebrated throughout the world with growing fervour every year. Since Bangla is spoken by nearly 300 million people worldwide and has a rich heritage in literature, history and other fields, our Parliament adopted a resolution requesting the United Nations to declare Bangla as one of its official languages. I fervently appeal to Member States for acceptance of our very legitimate request.

Every passing day, the peoples of the world are being drawn closer together, as one village, with quickly developing technologies and new challenges such as climate change, terrorism and economic interdependence. Indeed, our destiny is now one, as are our burdens and responsibilities. It is now obvious that only by mobilizing and optimizing our synergies will it be possible for us to create a world of shared peace and prosperity. We have no alternative but to discard our self-centred, short-sighted interests and work in unison for a world that our children, and theirs, will inherit, so that they will remember us with fondness and in gratitude.

May Bangladesh live forever. Long live the United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the statement she has just made.

Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Franco Frattini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy.

Mr. Frattini (Italy): Italy is about to celebrate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its unification. We are a young country, but a people with deep roots and ancient traditions. By our history, geographic location and age-old international outlook, we are proud of our illustrious legacy. By necessity and vocation, we are dedicated to dialogue, respect for diversity and mutual understanding.

There is no alternative to this inclusive approach, even when it requires compromises or concessions. I prefer to call it idealistic pragmatism, since our ultimate goal is to spread peace, freedom and prosperity, an ambition that is best achieved through cooperation. This propensity for dialogue is one of Italy's greatest contributions to the United Nations.

Italy is a strong supporter of the central role of the United Nations in global governance and in the management of international crises. By virtue of its universality and impartiality, the Organization has the legitimacy to intervene in crisis situations. Italy participates in peacekeeping missions not only by contributing large numbers of highly qualified troops,

but also by drafting strategic plans and protocol, and by providing training and logistic support. We are the sixth largest contributor to the United Nations regular and peacekeeping operations budgets and, since 2006, the top troop contributor to the United Nations among the members of the European Union (EU) and Group of Western European and Other States.

Approximately 8,000 Italian troops are assigned to operations under the aegis or the mandate of the United Nations. Our presence is spread across 22 missions throughout the world: from Lebanon to Haiti, the Balkans to Afghanistan. Through its experiences in these difficult areas, Italy has learned important lessons. In particular, our comprehensive approach provides valuable insight into how to integrate the military aspects of a mission with the commitment to economic, institutional and civil reconstruction.

We are convinced that, to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, the United Nations system must be strengthened, starting with its capacity to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations must be empowered to fulfil its role as a "producer" of security and stability, a role designed to foster reconciliation, strengthen democracy and, ultimately, help to create a more stable world.

This is why we support the Secretary-General's New Horizon and Global Field Support Strategy initiatives. We must also continue to foster synergies between the United Nations and regional organizations that play a key role in bringing peace to crisis areas. I refer to the African Union and, above all, to the European Union. The Treaty of Lisbon includes new arrangements for the EU's international representation. Once the resolution on EU participation in the work of the United Nations has finally been approved, I sincerely hope the European Union will be able to make a greater contribution to General Assembly responsibilities and to enhance the Assembly's capacity for providing political guidance.

In the field of security, a commitment to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has always been a feature of Italian foreign policy. Proliferation is a growing threat that can only be countered through international cooperation and, in this regard, the Italian Government has just put forth some concrete proposals. We need to

set the goal of a zero-nuclear option in an appropriate time frame, but without conveying the impression that it is an unrealistic aspiration.

The year 2010 is a key date on the road to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In this endeavour, our collective responsibility and credibility are at stake. Italy is a strong proponent of a holistic approach to development. For the sake of true democratic ownership, the donor community, in collaboration with the private sector and civil society, must work in a partnership that makes the beneficiary countries the protagonists of development.

The time has come for the international community and the United Nations to increase their commitment to two regional crises. Somalia is the most serious and urgent situation on the African continent today. In the past two years, the Italian Government has contributed considerable financing to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali security forces, but this is not enough. International support for AMISOM must be stepped up.

The second crisis is in Pakistan, where the recent floods have devastated the lives of 20 million people. The Italian Government is disbursing an additional aid package of €80 million to bring relief to the Pakistani population.

But in addition to providing aid, we need to act wisely. This is why Italy has called for new trade measures to increase market access for Pakistani goods and bolster Pakistan's economic recovery. A natural disaster of this magnitude also demonstrates the urgent need to address the effects of climate change through collective and shared measures.

Globalization has generated a new demand for belonging and identity. But a fruitful dialogue among cultures cannot take place without universal values. It is imperative to defend the universal validity of fundamental rights and avoid the risks of relativism. Given the strength of its humanistic heritage that affirms the human being as the measure of all things, Italy is well-equipped to play an important part in this dialectic.

True to this heritage, the Italian Government has promoted a campaign for a moratorium on the death penalty. We welcome the strengthening international trend towards achieving this objective, and hope it will be confirmed when Italy and a broad alliance of

countries present a resolution on the moratorium in the upcoming months.

Religious tolerance is a prerequisite for peace and a founding principle of our civilization. The right to search for truth through the word of God is the freedom of freedoms, but in some areas of the world people are afraid to freely and openly profess their faith because they face persecution by extremists. Italy is strongly committed to protecting freedom of religion and will always oppose discrimination against religious minorities. In fact, Italy together with its EU partners is actively involved in the preparation and presentation of the annual resolution on religious intolerance.

Another target of our fight against discrimination is the international initiative to ban female genital mutilation. Since September 2009, Italy, together with a group of African countries, has promoted such an initiative, which, hopefully, will lead to the presentation here in the Assembly of a resolution that fully respects African ownership.

Female genital mutilations, which violate a woman's physical integrity, affect millions of women and girls throughout the world, including in my country, where 35,000 such cases have been reported. Women's rights and national progress go hand in hand, but, nevertheless, women are still suffering in many countries throughout the world.

By pooling together our efforts we can ensure the necessary consensus for resolutions that safeguard our own and future generations from prejudice and intolerance. In this spirit, we very warmly welcome the creation of UN Women within the Secretariat and hope that it quickly becomes operative.

Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance requires a constant commitment to the comprehensive reform of the Organization. Such reform should affect the Secretariat, the various funds, agencies and programmes of the United Nations and, obviously, its decision-making bodies.

In regard to reform of the Security Council, we seek realistic compromise solutions that garner the broadest possible consensus and ensure an adequate representation of African, Arab and other underrepresented groups of countries. More than 15 years of negotiations have demonstrated that the membership is profoundly divided. It is now time to search for genuine and far-reaching compromise. Italy

and its Uniting for Consensus partners are ready to participate constructively in the reform process and have already demonstrated their flexibility. We look forward to engaging with the rest of the membership during the current session of the General Assembly.

The process of revitalizing the General Assembly should strive to restore its central role. The Assembly's universal character gives it potential for providing political guidance that should be realized. The Assembly is the place where we could jointly identify the main problems that threaten the security, stability and development of all Member States and draft common strategies to address them effectively.

In conclusion, the vision for the future to which my country, Italy, aspires — a future of peaceful coexistence and mutual enrichment between values and cultures — can only be ensured through the successful completion of the many reform processes under way. We can achieve this future if we build our actions on dialogue and mutual understanding. And when we do achieve peaceful coexistence and mutual enrichment, the United Nations system will be equipped with the tools it needs to fulfil the main principles and values of the Charter. One of these stands above all the others in importance: each and every individual throughout the world is endowed with inalienable and absolute rights concerning which no kind of compromise can ever be tolerated.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos Cuyaubé, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain.

Mr. Moratinos Cuyaubé (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): May my first words be to congratulate the newly appointed President of the Assembly, Mr. Joseph Deiss, to whom I wish great success in his conduct of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

September is an important month in the agenda of international politics since the middle of the last century because it marks the beginning of the new session of the United Nations General Assembly, which has the city of New York as its backdrop.

Far removed is the San Francisco Conference, which turned the page on global conflicts and opened the way for international cooperation by establishing a new Organization, the United Nations, an Organization geared towards promoting peace, justice and a better

life for all humankind. Far removed, as well, are the times of the Bretton Woods Agreements, which established free trade rules for commercial and financial relations among the most industrialized nations of the world in order to achieve peace.

In the first decade of this century we witnessed events that have shaped the future of international relations and caused a new world to emerge, as we saw in New York in the month of September. On 11 September 2001, the cities of New York and Washington suffered terrorist attacks that stunned the world and were among the most traumatic in the history of the West. In September 2008, New York was the centre and focus of a panic created by the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, while just a few weeks ago, our host city experienced tensions related to intercultural coexistence and saw the relaunching of the most ambitious programme of international cooperation in history, the Millennium Development Goals.

These events mark the true beginning of the twenty-first century, which is unfolding in an environment of accelerated global and interdependent transformation. We are at a historic crossroads where we must promote awareness of the reform of the United Nations system and the establishment of new mechanisms for global governance that modernize the system of international relations, consolidate multilateralism and security, and strengthen global economic recovery, while providing accountable management of growing interculturalism.

Effective multilateralism is the method that will enable us to tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century. It is a method that stems from the efforts of the General Assembly and from the commitment and work of the leaders of the States represented here. It is a method based on respect and understanding in order to build new alliances and common strategies and policies.

On many occasions, we hear speeches that emphasize the incapacities and weaknesses of the United Nations system. But I prefer not to preach classic doom and gloom here; rather, I would acknowledge the work and success of the United Nations as well as its capacity to respond, as seen in its response to the natural disasters suffered by Haiti and Pakistan. The capacity to take action and effectively coordinate the efforts of all countries through a

multilateral approach is a path that the international system should continue to follow at this time of great challenges before us.

On 11 September, the concept of security was transformed and expanded. In September 2006, the Member States approved the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, a resolution and annexed Plan of Action (resolution 60/288) which presumed for the first time to define a common strategic approach agreed by all States Members of the United Nations. This strategy was presented by Secretary-General Kofi Annan one year after the brutal and traumatic attacks of 11 March 2004 in Madrid. Since that time, the intensity and number of terrorist attacks have decreased, and we have improved security, although we are far from having won the war against international terrorism.

This year we have also seen very significant advances in the area of security, disarmament and nuclear non proliferation. The new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty makes it possible to reduce by 30 per cent of the nuclear warheads in the United States and Russia and represents the greatest nuclear agreement in 20 years. Last May, 189 countries signatories of the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons approved the convening of a conference in 2012 to transform the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

We are beginning to come out of the worst financial and economic crisis since the 1930s. The negative fallout of this crisis will be felt through time by millions of people, especially in terms of decent employment. Since the collapse of Lehman Brothers on 15 September 2008, the international financial system has required States and international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to intervene at an unprecedented level in order to maintain worldwide demand and financial markets.

The lack of international regulation helped to bring about the crisis of the financial entities and has required strengthened coordination, making the Group of 20 a new forum for economic governance. The lesson of the crisis is that, for their development, international markets need not only the invisible hand, but also a global regulatory system. That is what we have understood in Europe, where we have adopted measures to harmonize the legislation of member States, so that regulatory authorities would be able to

exercise both executive and disciplinary powers. Since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, Europe is now on a path to cohesiveness in the area of foreign policy and should be seen as a single interlocutor with its own voice in the international community. It should therefore enjoy an appropriate status in the General Assembly.

My Government, the Government of Spain, is in the vanguard of the fight against hunger and poverty. It has proposed in the United Nations, together with other Member States, the creation of a tax on international currency transactions whose proceeds would be used for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. While the Food and Agriculture Organization has provided us with encouraging data — we have seen hunger decrease in the world for the first time — the figure of 925 million hungry people in the world is morally and politically unacceptable.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon knows that he can count on Spain for the mobilization of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, fighting poverty cannot be a casualty of the economic recession because, despite the crisis, it is not material conditions but political will that will be the key to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The time has come to take responsibility for combating climate change. To face this challenge, we need to change the way in which we perceive development and economic growth. A greater effort is required to limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependency on fossil fuels, and to commit to renewable energy and efficient and responsible consumption. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has created a point of reference to provide us with a regime that defines realistic solutions and responds to our concerns and priorities.

In a few months, we will attend the Climate Change Conference and should be aware of the effort necessary to pave the way to the meeting in Cancún, where the very credibility of the multilateral system will be at stake. The Conference will be successful if we take a realistic approach demonstrating solidarity and generosity towards the most vulnerable States. It should lead us to an ambitious agreement by which States represented in the General Assembly can take

ownership of the objectives and verifiable commitments contained therein.

To bring these objectives to fruition, we need the equitable integration of almost half the world's population — women. The tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, should provide us with an opportunity to enhance gender equality in the public arena, in institutions and in the economic, social and cultural spheres. We can and should move ahead with these reforms because there are positive indications that this mandate is dynamic, such as the recent creation of UN Women, led by former President of Chile Michelle Bachelet, whom I congratulate on her appointment as Director of the new entity.

With regard to human rights, Spain is firmly committed to abolishing the death penalty and introduced an initiative to the General Assembly two years ago to that end. The International Commission against the Death Penalty, proposed by Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, will soon be established and begin its work. We believe that capital punishment is an absolute violation of human rights due to its irreversibility, which also makes it the most extreme case of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

My country unequivocally supports peaceful and negotiated solutions to all international conflicts, in accordance with United Nations resolutions. Achieving peace in the Middle East remains a strategic priority for Spain. That is why, on the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the Madrid Conference, we continue to work resolutely to ensure that the process of direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians will finally lead to the two-State solution. The Israeli and Palestinian peoples know they can count on all our support at this time, when various thorny issues related to the conflict are being addressed.

In this regard, I add my voice to the appeal made from this very rostrum by the President of the United States for the moratorium on building in the settlements to be maintained. In order to achieve a lasting, fair and comprehensive peace, it is vital to resolve the issues that relate to Syria and Lebanon and to work within a multilateral framework that creates a genuine global coalition for peace in the Middle East.

We all know that stability in the Western Balkans and the full integration of its countries into the

European Union is a basic priority for Europe. In 2010, we commemorated the tenth anniversary of the Zagreb Conference. Spain, which held the European Union presidency at the time, convened a high-level meeting in Sarajevo in May that was attended by all actors involved and at which the European Union reaffirmed its commitment to the region's stability and European future. Recently, the consensus adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 64/298, sponsored by the 27 members of the European Union and Serbia on one of the region's pending issues showed the willingness of all actors in the international community to achieve the aforementioned objectives.

Spain reiterates its support for the mediation efforts undertaken by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Christopher Ross. The conflict in that territory must be resolved by mutual agreement among the parties and pursuant to the United Nations resolutions calling for the self-determination of the Saharans.

In our view, Ibero-America is undergoing unprecedented social and political change. At the start of the bicentennial commemorations of the independence of these republics, Spain wishes to join the celebrations by attending the Ibero-American summits and by strengthening its bilateral relations and relations between the European Union and Latin America.

Cuba deserves special mention following the recent decisions taken by Cuban authorities. Embargos and unilateral attitudes that only disappoint new expectations are useless and make no sense.

Africa is clearly one of the most important future challenges to the international community and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Progress achieved in the areas of good governance and democratization on the continent are cause for optimism and should allow it, with international cooperation, to overcome the crises in the Sahel, Somalia or the Great Lakes region. Spain reiterates its firm commitment to Africa.

Coexistence in a globalized world should motivate us to strengthen the instruments for good governance and promote cultural and intercultural diversity, which are among the most pressing challenges of the twenty-first century. International consolidation of the Alliance of Civilizations, as a tool of preventive diplomacy, is now a fact and a resource

we must use. More than 100 States, along with 23 international organizations, now belong to the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations. I take this opportunity to invite those countries that have not yet joined to do so.

In a landscape of international economic crisis, intercultural tensions run the risk of exacerbation. This should impel us to continue working for the respect and understanding of cultures and civilizations in order to counter expressions of hatred, fanaticism, division and confrontation.

The new world requires us to adapt and enlarge the international institutional architecture. As the Spanish philosopher, José Ortega y Gasset said, "men do not live together just because; they do so for the purpose of great undertakings". Today the United Nations has a great undertaking: to complete the reform of our institutions and lay the foundations for global governance. Together, we can face the challenges and global crises of the twenty-first century and construct an international system that is fairer, more balanced and more sustainable.

Bretton Woods in 1944 and the San Francisco Conference in 1945 were the results of half a century of crises and two world wars. Believe me, we are not doomed to wait another half century to reform and establish new institutions for the twenty-first century. We have already waited a decade, but we cannot continue to wait much longer, because we can feel history breathing down our necks.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Michael Spindelegger, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria.

Mr. Spindelegger (Austria): The tragic earthquake in Haiti, the devastating floods in Pakistan and the financial crisis have reminded us that the global challenges of the twenty-first century require concerted action. The United Nations needs to be at the centre of our activities. It is the forum of today's multilateral system that enjoys the highest degree of legitimacy. Inclusiveness is its key comparative advantage.

However, this moral authority must be matched by mechanisms and resources to ensure its effectiveness. Adherence to the rule of law is fundamental. All multilateral efforts and activities need

to operate on the basis of clear and predictable rules that apply equally to all Member States. Member States, as well as men and women around the globe, must be able to trust in the United Nations capacity to turn the promises of the Charter into reality.

Cooperation with other international actors is indispensable to the United Nations efforts to deal with the complex challenges of today. Austria and the European Union (EU) stand ready as reliable partners for the United Nations in areas ranging from development cooperation and humanitarian aid to the maintenance of international peace and security and to promoting the respect for the rule of law and human rights. In this context, we hope that our initiative to obtain modalities for the EU's participation in the General Assembly, reflecting the changes provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon, will soon be adopted. This would greatly help to reinforce the productive partnership of the United Nations with an organization that is fully committed to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter. Austria is proud to contribute to the work of the United Nations by hosting the United Nations Office at Vienna. We will continue to offer Vienna as a platform for dialogue and cooperation.

In our view, good governance is an inherent element of global governance. The Vienna-based United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is central to the United Nations efforts to combat corruption and organized crime by supporting Member States in implementing international standards, including the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Corruption presents one of the major challenges with dire consequences for the international community's efforts to reduce poverty. The recent founding of the International Anti-Corruption Academy in Austria is an important step towards addressing this challenge. That institution aims to provide a tool for research, education and training for professionals from all fields, including law enforcement officials, judges and prosecutors.

The fight against climate change is one of the central issues of the twenty-first century. Climate change has a far-reaching impact on the economic and social development of the entire international community. We need global consensus now if we want to achieve the goal to limit global warming to 2°C and to reverse the trend of rising greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. Nobody should underestimate the difficulty of

this task. However, the fight against climate change is also an opportunity. We have the chance to create a framework for sustainable, qualitative growth at the global level. Austria is committed to contributing to this endeavour.

This week, leaders agreed on concrete actions to get the Millennium Development Goals back on track in the fight against world poverty. We now need to mobilize all our efforts to live up to this renewed commitment, particularly in addressing the special needs of Africa in this regard. The Governments of developing and developed countries, as well as the private sector and civil society, need to work together to achieve our ambitious goals by 2015.

Let me now turn to one of the most urgent threats to peace and security. These days, our attention is focused on the recently initiated direct talks between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas. We welcome the leadership and commitment of President Obama, who made this development possible. These talks offer the first concrete prospects for a sustainable peace in the Middle East in many years. An agreement between Israel and Palestine would not only radically improve the lives of the peoples concerned, but would also provide the key to a more stable region and a more peaceful world. We hope that both sides are aware of their enormous responsibilities.

The process is still fragile. We believe that the extension of the settlement moratorium is fundamental to keeping the talks on track and creating an environment in which the core issues can be tackled successfully. It is equally important that the efforts of the Palestinian authorities to build up functioning institutions for a future Palestinian State move forward dynamically. It is ultimately up to the parties to bring the peace process to a positive conclusion. However, international actors, in particular the members of the Quartet, have an important role to play. As a member of the European Union, Austria is ready to fully play its part.

In order to ensure that the United Nations continues to play a central role in global governance, we must continue with our efforts towards internal reform of the United Nations, including the reform of the Security Council. Both an enlargement of the Security Council that reflects today's political, economic and social realities and a reform of the Council's working methods will enhance the Council's

legitimacy and the acceptance of its decisions. As an elected member of the Security Council, we participate in its work with great commitment and are doing our best to promote effectiveness and transparency.

Significant efforts are under way to ensure and sustain United Nations peacekeeping as an essential tool for achieving the goals of the United Nations. Confronted with limited financial and human resources and the increasing complexity of peacekeeping operations, the United Nations has started a review of the whole United Nations peacekeeping system with a view to adjusting it to the needs of the twenty-first century. It is of vital importance for the Council to effectively monitor and oversee the implementation of peacekeeping mandates, in close cooperation with troop and police contributors, the Secretariat and United Nations missions. Austria fully supports the ongoing peacekeeping reform and stands ready to play its part in a renewed global peacekeeping partnership.

We also have to work on making peace consolidation irreversible. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, together with integrated peacebuilding support offices, has a key role in fostering sustainable peace. If we use the peacebuilding architecture optimally, lasting peace can be achieved with determination and the political will of the country concerned, as well as the support of the international community. Since peacekeeping and peacebuilding must be approached in an integrated manner, we strongly support the enhanced interaction of the Security Council with the Peacebuilding Commission throughout the conflict cycle, as was affirmed at the Security Council summit this week.

Due to the changing nature of conflict and an increase in the activities of non-State actors, the protection of civilians in armed conflict constitutes a core task of a large number of United Nations peacekeeping missions. The effective protection of those affected by hostilities and violence has become a yardstick for the success and credibility of United Nations missions in the field and the United Nations at large. Security Council resolution 1894 (2009), unanimously adopted in November last year, was a major step forward in the Council's efforts to better protect civilians from physical violence, displacement and violations of their rights.

However, resolution 1894 (2009) has not yet had its full impact on the ground. Violations of

international humanitarian and human rights law and impunity for such crimes continue to pose a major threat to the rule of law and lasting peace in post-conflict situations.

Austria acknowledges the primary responsibility of States to ensure the protection of civilians, including the credible prosecution of those responsible for war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity or other serious violations of international law. We support the use and promotion of mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court, commissions of inquiry or panels of experts. Such tools should be seen as a viable complement and reinforcement of steps taken at the national level to ensure accountability. The Security Council has a central role in this endeavour. Ensuring the implementation of resolution 1894 (2009) will be one of the key priorities of Austria during the remainder of its term on the Council.

Austria also attaches utmost importance to enhancing the role of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. Even 10 years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, we can still witness major gaps. Women continue to be largely absent from peace processes and conflict-resolution efforts, and crimes against them all too often remain unpunished. The latest, shocking mass rapes in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo demonstrate more than ever that there is urgent need for action. We cannot afford to ignore those gaps. The occasion of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) will therefore provide a crucial opportunity to work towards more consistent implementation in promoting women's issues in all aspects of international peace efforts. Those efforts are fully supported by our development cooperation.

Austria warmly welcomes the milestone decision of the General Assembly to establish UN Women, which will make the United Nations a stronger and more effective partner in the advancement of women worldwide. We look forward to working with Michelle Bachelet towards our common goals.

Children in armed conflict deserve special protection. I am very satisfied that the United Nations system has made concrete progress in combating serious child rights violations and in fighting the recruitment and enlisting of child soldiers.

Austria reiterates the pivotal role of the United Nations at the centre of our counter-terrorism efforts. Respect for human rights and the rule of law is a fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism. As Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban, Austria is committed to enhancing due process in the Council's sanctions regimes. We therefore welcome the substantial improvements of the listing and de-listing procedures and the recent appointment of Ms. Kimberly Prost as Ombudsperson.

The Austrian candidature for the Human Rights Council for the period 2011-2014 is a logical continuation of our long-term work and engagement in ensuring the respect for human rights, including in the Security Council. Dialogue and partnerships are crucial for turning the promises of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into a reality for all people around the globe. Austria has consistently worked with all actors towards narrowing the gap between standards and their implementation at the national and international levels.

To end on a positive note, this past year saw the most positive developments towards nuclear disarmament in a decade. Security Council resolution 1887 (2009), adopted just a year ago, provided a powerful impetus. Although many issues are still unresolved and require our close attention, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in May produced an outcome that restored confidence in the Treaty. For the first time, a comprehensive action plan dealing with all three pillars of the Treaty was agreed. Let me stress here that Austria is honoured to have contributed to that success. For the first time, a world without nuclear weapons was accepted as the goal of all parties, who pledged to ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons. For the first time, the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons were recognized — an important step towards the eventual legal ban of nuclear weapons by means of a nuclear weapons convention or framework of legal instruments.

Although the results of the Conference are positive, much remains to be done. The action plan needs to be implemented. The nuclear-weapon States — which promised to engage among themselves on a number of vital issues and report by 2014 — must

lead by example. The international disarmament structures must be reformed. I am grateful for Secretary-General Ban's initiative in this respect.

Finally, we must learn from successful disarmament initiatives. Let me underline that Austria is delighted that the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force last month. The Convention is a positive example of how committed Governments, international organizations and civil society can work together to achieve real progress. In order to promote interaction in this respect in the nuclear field as well, Austria supports the establishment of a competence centre for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in Vienna early next year. Conceived as a platform for open discussion and independent expertise, monitoring and advocacy, the centre shall facilitate understanding and cooperation among all entities involved. I hope that it will contribute to further progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We, the United Nations, have shared responsibility to move forward jointly in order to reach our common goal of international peace, security and development for all.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa.

Ms. Nkoana-Mashabane (South Africa): My delegation joins previous speakers in expressing our congratulations to Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We want to take this opportunity to assure him of our full cooperation and to wish him a very successful and rewarding term. I also take this opportunity to thank Mr. Ali Treki for the excellent work he did in steering this Assembly during his tenure as President during its sixty-fourth session.

The theme of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly — "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance" — resonates with what our global citizen, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, said about this body on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary:

"The United Nations has to reassess its role, redefine its profile and reshape its structures. It should truly reflect the diversity of our universe and ensure equity among the nations in the

exercise of power within the system of international relations, in general, and the Security Council, in particular." (A/50/PV.37, p. 6)

My delegation supports the choice of this theme, and we wish to reiterate our belief in the centrality of the United Nations and the system of multilateralism.

Despite the challenges that face humanity in the twenty-first century, the relevance of the United Nations as a multilateral mechanism through which a myriad of complex world affairs can be administered and resolved cannot be overemphasized. Those challenges compel us more than ever before to strengthen the United Nations. South Africa is committed to working with other Member States to achieve the full potential of the United Nations to address the urgent challenges facing the international community by making it more relevant, more responsive to the diversity of humankind and more representative.

The creation of the United Nations was one of the notable successes of the twentieth century, and thanks to its existence the world has been spared another war on the scale and magnitude of the First and Second World Wars. The exponential growth in the membership of the Organization over the years, from 51 Members in 1945 to 192 today, clearly demonstrates the confidence that the peoples of the world have placed in the United Nations and the ideals contained in its Charter.

The universal membership of the United Nations gives it the legitimacy to be at the centre of efforts to address global challenges. However, the question is whether the United Nations has leveraged that diversity of its membership as a source of strength and acted decisively against any tendency that runs contrary to its fundamental values and founding principles.

The answer to this is yes because, in the past, the United Nations played an invaluable role in the worldwide process of decolonization, transforming the political landscape of the world and bringing much-cherished freedom and independence to the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Organization was instrumental in bringing about the demise of the universally despised apartheid system in our own country, South Africa.

When the Organization recognized the right to development as a human right, it gave voice and hope to those who know the face of poverty. When the Organization has sent its troops to far-flung places to keep peace among neighbours who should be living together, it has again underscored the reason for which it was established. Amid all the challenges, the United Nations has been relevant and responsive to our diverse interests.

Five years ago, at the World Summit, we agreed that, if the Organization were to continue to play its central role in global governance effectively, there was a need to strengthen and reposition it to deal with the challenges of the twenty-first century. We believe that the revitalization of the General Assembly remains one of the cornerstones of the United Nations reform agenda. The General Assembly is the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations and plays a critical role in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law. Its decisions are taken by a collective among equals for the common good.

We will support measures that are aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the General Assembly, especially regarding its role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Indeed, we witnessed with satisfaction how, on several occasions, the General Assembly acted promptly when the Security Council was unwilling or unable to respond to grave developments in the aftermath of the conflict in Gaza in 2009.

Indeed, no transformation of the United Nations could be complete without the fundamental reform of the Security Council. South Africa believes that the objective of the reform should be to create a Security Council that is truly representative of the membership and effectively responsive to international crises, as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations. Indeed, it remains a travesty of justice that Africa, which accounts for a large portion of the work of the Council, is not represented in the permanent category. Thus, deliberations about us carry on without us.

The world should be free of weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with our undertakings on total disarmament. In that regard, South Africa welcomes the recently agreed programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament.

While the right to development and freedom from want are central to the work of the United Nations, we have just ended the High-level Plenary Meeting to review our performance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and agreed that more needs to be done to act on commitments already made by the international community in that regard.

The people of Haiti have a story to tell about how best the international community can respond in unison and effectively to a nation in distress.

A speedy and satisfactory conclusion of the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization, which promised so much for the developing South, unfortunately remains a dream yet to be fulfilled. At the same time, the global economic crisis has highlighted the point that many of us have always made about the need to work for an international financial architecture that is sensitive to the development needs of the South.

The contribution of the Group of 20 (G-20) is a welcome development in that regard, and we believe that the Group should complement and reinforce the good work of the United Nations and not act as an alternative. In its composition, the G-20 will also need to mirror the rich diversity of humankind by making sure that all regions of the world, in particular Africa, are well represented. We look forward to the full implementation of the undertakings made to transform the international financial architecture, including the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions, as a step towards building a world system founded on equity and social justice.

Environmental issues, including climate change, have also become high on the priorities of the international agenda. South Africa is fully committed to a multilateral outcome on the basis of the Bali Plan of Action, with a two-track negotiated and legally binding outcome. We are convinced that the Copenhagen Accord provides political guidance for future negotiations.

Accordingly, we should work together to ensure that the forthcoming meeting of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Mexico takes bold and concrete steps to address climate change and its effects. For our part, South Africa will have the opportunity to host the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties in December 2011, on the

eve of the end of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

Peace and stability are one of the preconditions for bringing about an Africa of the new beginning that the Chairperson of the African Union, His Excellency President Wa Mutharika of Malawi, spoke of on the first day of the general debate (see A/65/PV.11). The United Nations has been an important partner to Africa, working with us through the African Union, whether in Somalia, the Sudan or the Democratic Republic of Congo. South Africa is encouraged by the commitment shown by the international community in trying to assist the both the Government of the Sudan and Southern Sudan as they prepare for the upcoming referendum in January 2011.

The people of Zimbabwe also need the helping hand of the international community in implementing their Global Political Agreement. The African Union and the Southern African Development Community speak for us, too, in calling for the lifting of sanctions against Zimbabwe. We will continue to work with the peoples of Zimbabwe, Madagascar and Burundi, among others, in their efforts to build and consolidate peace and democracy in their respective countries.

In the case of Western Sahara, South Africa remains concerned about the continuing impasse, which stands in the way of a solution that will result in the people of Western Sahara exercising their inalienable right to self-determination. We count on the United Nations, especially the Security Council, to continue to make decisions that enable us to decisively deal with the challenges of peace and security on our continent.

The United Nations should see Africa as a partner in the maintenance of international peace and the management of conflicts, and accordingly do more to strengthen the working relationship between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. In this respect, South Africa will continue to support all international efforts to help the people of Palestine and Israel in their endeavour to find lasting peace, leading to the establishment of a viable Palestinian State, on the basis of the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, existing side by side in peace and security with Israel.

We are at one with the call made by several delegations for the lifting of the embargo on the Republic of Cuba.

We have converged here year after year to make strong statements on Palestine, the embargo on Cuba and the independence of the Western Sahara. The ultimate test of the relevance of the United Nations will therefore be in bringing closure to all these long outstanding issues in a manner that is consistent with our decisions and the collective will of nations represented in this Organization.

The President returned to the Chair.

In conclusion, we were also privileged recently to be the stage, and Africa the theatre, of the 2010 Fédération internationale de football association World Cup tournament. Our people spoke for us during that soccer event in how they embraced each other and in their diversity of many nations, consistent with the spirit of ubuntu, which simply means "I am because you are". They gave us hope and confirmed the faith we have in our belief that a better world is possible. The role of sport in development and in advancing peace can never be underestimated. As States, we can best respond to this message from our people by making sure that the United Nations, in playing its role in the global system, is more relevant, more inclusive and more representative.

Looking ahead, South Africa is honoured to have been endorsed by the African Union as a candidate for the Security Council non-permanent membership for the period 2011-2012. We stand ready to continue to contribute to the achievement of peace and security in the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Edward Nalbandyan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.

Mr. Nalbandyan (Armenia) (*spoke in French*): Each year, the great family of nations comes together to assess what the Organization has achieved and to consider together ways to respond to the problems facing the world and to acknowledge what unites our nations and what still divides them.

For 65 years, the General Assembly has carried out this both difficult and noble mission. That mission was summarized very well by the first speaker at the first session of the General Assembly, on 10 January 1946, as the maintenance of peace and security and the establishment, through cooperation, of those conditions of stability and well-being which will ensure peaceful and friendly relations, based on the principle of equal

rights and self-determination among the nations of the world.

Since then, the General Assembly has changed. The number of Members has almost quadrupled, major decisions have been made, historic documents have been adopted, old problems have given way to new, and the scope of responsibilities of the General Assembly has greatly increased as it has opened itself to new challenges in international security, non-proliferation, disarmament, respect for human rights, poverty, terrorism, global warming, the financial crisis and many other issues.

In short, many things have changed, including the century.

Nevertheless and despite the developments that have marked recent decades, the situation in the region where Armenia is situated prompts me to return to that day, 10 January 1946, which is so distant yet so close, given the objectives that were put forward then and which continue more than ever to underpin our actions.

How is it possible to maintain peace, security and stability when we keep raising defence spending and regularly threaten to use force and to start wars? How can we promote friendly and peaceful relations between peoples when we promote intolerance and hatred and impose blockades and closed borders? How can we assure the principle of the equal rights of peoples and their right to make their own decisions when we reject the fundamental principle of international law — the right of peoples to self-determination?

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to hereby touch upon the conflict between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh exercised their right to self-determination two decades ago. They fought for their right to freedom, withstanding the brutal war unleashed by Azerbaijan, which had suppressed them for 70 years and attempted to cleanse them from their ancestral home. For that purpose, it even resorted to the use of mercenaries closely linked to international terrorist organizations. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh had to pursue their right to self-determination as they were being denied their right to existence.

The right of peoples to self-determination is a fundamental and indispensable right enshrined in the

Charter of the United Nations. The advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in July reaffirmed the wisdom of the founders of this Organization, who made sure that one of the fundamental principles for maintaining peace and stability in the world — the right of peoples to self-determination — could not be underrated in any way compared with the other principles of international law.

Let us be realistic. One cannot say each and every time that this is the last self-determination case. No one is able to stop the progress of history; otherwise, there would not be 192 Member States in this Organization instead of 51, as there were at the time of its founding.

The Nagorno-Karabakh peace process moves forward with the internationally mandated mediation of the Co-Chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, who continue their persistent efforts aimed at the peaceful settlement of the conflict based on the fundamental principles of international law: the non-use of force or threat of force, the equal rights and self-determination of peoples and territorial integrity.

On 17 July, at the margins of the OSCE informal ministerial meeting in Almaty, the Minsk Group Co-Chairs issued a statement in which they reiterated that the proposed principles and elements have been conceived as an integrated whole and that any attempt to select some of them over others would make it impossible to achieve a balanced solution. Armenia fully shares this vision and will continue the negotiations on that basis in search of a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Unfortunately, Azerbaijan rejects two of the three principles mentioned and is attempting not only to turn upside down the essence of the negotiation process, but also to distort the nature of the conflict in various international forums, including the General Assembly, as happened here about two weeks ago and again two days ago. That country is attempting to mislead the international community, presenting the consequences of the conflict as its causes.

Azerbaijan's unabated war rhetoric, growing violations of the ceasefire regime, and unprecedented military budget increases only exacerbate the situation, raising concerns about the already fragile stability in the region. Azerbaijan continues to reject proposals to come to an agreement on the non-use of force or threat

of force, as well as calls for the consolidation of the ceasefire. Azerbaijan's attitude thus represents a threat to regional peace and security. The money it derives from oil revenues is being directed at funding new military ventures. We all know the potential results of such adventurism.

Azerbaijan should refrain from its continuing attempts to remove the settlement process from the Minsk Group format and framework and from making provocative and bellicose statements and actions, in order that the negotiation process may proceed more constructively and effectively.

In an era when the protection and promotion of human rights are considered essential in the civilized world, intolerance for the values of others and acts that intentionally, consistently and repeatedly damage or destroy the cultural or religious heritage of other civilizations must be condemned with the same resolve and determination as violence against people.

The destruction by Azerbaijanis between 1998 and 2005 in Nakhichevan of thousands of cross-stones delicately carved by Armenian masters in the ninth to the sixteenth centuries is a vivid example of such a crime. Under the Azerbaijani Government's watchful eye, thousands of these gigantic medieval sculptures were bulldozed and the area turned into a military zone in a Government-sanctioned operation. A resolution at the sixteenth General Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites stated regretfully with regard to this act of vandalism: "... this heritage that once enjoyed its worthy place among the treasures of the world's heritage can no longer be transmitted today to future generations".

Armenia's initiative for the normalization of relations with Turkey without any preconditions was fully supported by the international community. Last year, after intensive negotiations, we achieved agreement and finally signed the Armenian-Turkish protocols. We made a confident investment in a durable rapprochement, while Turkey, unfortunately, backtracked from its commitments and not only refrained from ratifying the signed protocols, but returned to its initial language of preconditions. Consequently, the Armenian-Turkish border continues to remain the only closed border in Europe. Good intentions must be proved in deeds, not just words. Armenia is ready to move forward when Turkey will

once again be prepared to normalize relations without preconditions.

While we are discussing all possible ways to create a more prosperous and safer world for our peoples, we would be remiss if we did not speak about the responsibility to protect. As a nation we survived the most heinous crime against humanity, genocide, 95 years ago. We attach the utmost importance to furthering all international efforts aimed at the prevention of genocide and crimes against humanity. It is encouraging that further discussions of the Secretary-General's report on early warning, assessment and the responsibility to protect (A/64/864) are being held in the General Assembly. This will enable us come up with a formula that will allow us to act in a timely and coherent manner, utilizing all the United Nations system resources and capabilities for early warning, assessment and prevention of situations that could lead to genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity.

To bolster United Nations capacity to deal with current challenges and those ahead, we need to increase our efforts to further the process of United Nations reform, making more efficient and effective use of existing resources, making the "One United Nations" policy work, and better utilizing regional capacities to complement our global actions.

Today, the world is evolving faster than ever. To meet security, political, economic, social, environmental and other challenges we simply have to put our efforts, resources, and political determination together to deal with them and move the international development agenda forward.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Shin Kak-soo, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Shin Kak-soo (Republic of Korea): I would like to begin by extending my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I have every confidence that under your distinguished leadership this session will indeed yield fruitful results. May I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki moon. We deeply appreciate his wholehearted commitment and selfless dedication to the noble and lofty goals of this august Organization.

Since their launch in 2000, we have made headway towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Yet progress varies greatly across regions and countries and is uneven in terms of targets. Among other things, maternal and child health warrants our special attention as the most off-track goal in most regions. Indeed, improving maternal and child health is the best investment we can make to carry momentum over to all other closely related goals. In view of the importance it attaches to this goal, the Republic of Korea has joined the Group of 8 Muskoka Initiative for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. Furthermore, Korea fully supports the Secretary-General's pursuit of the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, and it welcomes the enthusiasm of all stakeholders for this important initiative, as was demonstrated at this week's meeting.

With only five years remaining until 2015, the prospects for meeting the MDGs are not altogether encouraging. It is high time for the international community to renew its resolve and galvanize global efforts to achieve these vast and meaningful goals. I earnestly hope that, when we gather again in 2013 to review progress, we will find that implementation of the commitments at the High-level Meeting held earlier this week exceeds our most optimistic expectations.

We must bear in mind that the success of the MDGs hinges on honouring development commitments and redoubling efforts to strengthen global partnership. In full recognition of this, the Republic of Korea has embarked on a midterm plan to triple its official development assistance (ODA) budget over the next five years to 0.25 per cent of gross national income, despite tight financial constraints.

As a new Member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee, Korea is seeking to improve the quality of its development assistance by undertaking far-reaching reforms in its ODA system. Last year, basic laws on ODA were enacted as the first step forward. Korea will also align its development policy to reflect the actual needs of the recipient countries and encourage their taking ownership. With its unique experience of fast economic and social development, Korea will do its utmost to play a bridging role between the donor and recipient countries.

Next year, Korea will host the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan. The Korean

Government will make every possible effort to ensure that this forum serves to map out a new direction for international development cooperation that can address evolving global needs.

It is indeed our common belief that development cooperation is an investment for all. A sustainable and balanced world economy requires us to narrow down the persistent development gap. This is the shared goal of the Group of 20 (G-20) and the United Nations. The G-20 leaders have agreed to place development as a crucial new item on the agenda for the upcoming G-20 summit in Seoul this November. The G-20 development agenda will concentrate on building capacity to promote economic growth in the developing world. In this way, the Group of 20 is expected to complement the ongoing development agenda, including the MDGs.

Global financial safety nets will be another new agenda item at the Seoul summit. Robust and reliable global financial safety nets are vital, especially for developing countries, which are most vulnerable to volatile global capital flows. The Seoul summit will focus on faithful implementation of the previous agreements, which will help to bring back the stability of the global market at an early date. Leaders will continue to coordinate their policies for a strong, sustainable and balanced growth of the world economy. Reforms of international financial institutions and financial regulations will also be central to the discussion at the G-20 summit.

As the G-20 President this year, Korea is committed to ensuring a successful outcome for the summit, one that will contribute to overcoming the current crisis and to working out the post-crisis management of the world economy.

In discussing economic growth, particular emphasis must be placed on green growth. Indeed, this lies at the heart of sustainable development. In an effort to curb greenhouse gas emissions, Korea has set a voluntary reduction target of 30 per cent against the business-as-usual levels by 2020. Together, we will gradually shift the growth paradigm from an energy-intensive to a green growth economy.

As part of the efforts to promote the green growth strategy in the international community, we launched the Global Green Growth Institute last June. We hope that this institute will become an integral part of the global endeavour to move towards sustainable

development as Korea strives to share green growth vision and assistance with developing countries.

On the peace and security front, peacekeeping operations have become the most visible and defining feature of the United Nations. The increasing demand and growing complexity of peacekeeping operations call for continuous improvement in the operation of the missions.

Strategic goals should be set more clearly. The troops should be deployed more swiftly. Operations should be conducted in a more professional and disciplined way. To this end, all stakeholders, including troop-contributing countries and financial contributors, should focus on close coordination and cooperation.

The Republic of Korea has been a committed contributor to United Nations peacekeeping efforts. Korea dispatched 240 contingent troops this year alone to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti to help rebuild the country shaken by a tragic earthquake. Currently, some 650 Korean soldiers are serving in 11 peacekeeping missions, including the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. We believe that our newly enacted law on participation in peacekeeping operations will further enhance our response capacity in United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations.

One of the most urgent security challenges today is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. It is imperative to further strengthen international disarmament and non-proliferation regimes built around the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In this regard, Korea welcomes the adoption of the Final Document at the 2010 NPT Review Conference in May. We trust that this hard-won achievement will lay the groundwork for future progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The nexus between weapons of mass destruction and terrorism also poses a grave risk to global security. With this shared understanding, the leaders at the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington, D.C., last April recognized the potentially catastrophic consequences of nuclear terrorism and committed to strengthening nuclear security. It was agreed that concrete steps for securing nuclear materials should be taken to prevent them from falling into the hands of terrorists. We look forward to follow-up discussions on

nuclear security at the second Nuclear Security Summit, which is to be held in Korea in 2012.

In August, President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea proposed a new vision of the peaceful reunification of Korea, which will serve to stabilize inter-Korean relations and ultimately bring about a reunified Korea. To make this vision reality, we will work earnestly to build three communities: a peace community to ensure security and peace on the Korean peninsula; an economic community to develop North Korea's economy and eventually achieve inter-Korean economic integration; and a community of the Korean nation which will ensure the dignity, freedom and human rights of all individuals.

However, this vision for peaceful reunification is not without obstacles. Sixty years after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, there still remain threats to peace on the Korean peninsula. A case in point is the sinking of the Republic of Korea's naval vessel, the Cheonan, by a North Korean torpedo attack on 26 March this year. The international community sent a firm and unified message to North Korea by adopting the Security Council presidential statement of 9 July. North Korea must take responsibility for its unprovoked attack and refrain from any further provocations.

The biggest obstacle in our path towards a peace community is the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue. Unless North Korea forgoes its nuclear weapons programme, no sustainable peace can be achieved on the Korean peninsula and beyond.

Through the adoption of Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009), the international community urged North Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. In order to secure the lifting of sanctions and the ending of isolation, North Korea should make the strategic decision to live up to its commitments to denuclearization. A nuclear-free North Korea would also open the way to saving its people from the current miserable human rights and humanitarian situation.

Last year, on this very occasion, President Lee proposed the "grand bargain" initiative: a single comprehensive agreement that encompasses all steps for North Korea's denuclearization and the five parties' corresponding measures. Together with the international community, we will work tirelessly to

persuade North Korea to make the right choice — a choice that will ensure a better future for both its country and its people. Once North Korea demonstrates genuine change in its behaviour and attitude, my Government is prepared to engage in meaningful dialogue and cooperation with North Korea.

We are witnessing many global challenges that are testing the international community. These challenges cannot be addressed by one country alone or even by a group of countries. They summon us as global citizens to fulfil a common purpose. They call on the United Nations to assume the mantle of global leadership. In order to effectively address the increasingly diverse and interconnected challenges, the United Nations should heighten its reform efforts aimed at broadening its operational response capacity.

The launch of UN Women is a clear testimony to the world community's efforts towards this end. Korea commends that historic move to step up progress in meeting the needs of women and girls worldwide. UN Women will greatly contribute to enhancing system-wide coherence, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact. We also welcome the recent appointment of Michelle Bachelet at its helm.

Furthermore, the upcoming review of the Human Rights Council represents an excellent opportunity to muster our collective efforts to make the Council more effective and efficient at fulfilling the promises we made at its establishment. The Republic of Korea looks forward to working closely with the international community in this joint effort.

No reform of the United Nations can be complete without Security Council reform. It is crucial that the Council be more representative, effective and accountable. To this end, the Republic of Korea will continue to play a constructive role in finding the widest possible agreement on the major issues relating to Council reform.

The challenges facing the United Nations are formidable. We may succeed in some endeavours and not in others, but we should not forget that the United Nations is the best source of hope for many who are suffering from armed conflicts, extreme poverty and human rights abuses across the globe. The Republic of Korea remains fully committed to playing its due part in the efforts of the United Nations to translate those hopes into reality.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

The representative of the Sudan has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

I wish to remind him that statements made in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second one and must be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Elshareef (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At this morning's meeting we heard the representative of the Netherlands express in his statement the refusal of his Government to accept that the President of my country, the Sudan, be permitted to travel to his country. He said that:

"it is unacceptable to the Dutch Government that someone like President Al-Bashir of the Sudan, against whom an arrest warrant is outstanding, should be allowed to move freely in a country that is an ICC partner". (A.65/PV.16)

I would like to tell the representative of the Netherlands that we are surprised by such a statement, which demonstrates an ignorance of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, because my

country, the Sudan, is not a signatory of that Statute. It also shows a blatant ignorance of a principle of international law known even to junior law students — I repeat, junior students of the law. I am referring to the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which stipulates that a State that is not a party to a treaty is not bound by that treaty's provisions.

I wish to call attention in the same context to a resolution issued by the African Union following the visit of the President of the Republic of the Sudan to Kenya and Chad and its affirmation of the commitment of all States members of the African Union to the decisions of the African Union in this matter. That statement expressed appreciation of the courageous stands of Kenya and Chad and their commitment to the decisions of the African Union.

Furthermore, we tell the representative of the Netherlands that what he has said is unacceptable. It is an audacious interference in the internal affairs of our country, because it is the right of any country to host whomever it wants to host. However, it seems that some countries are still moved by memories of past colonialism, the same heinous colonialism whereby such countries usurped the freedom and wealth of other nations and peoples.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.